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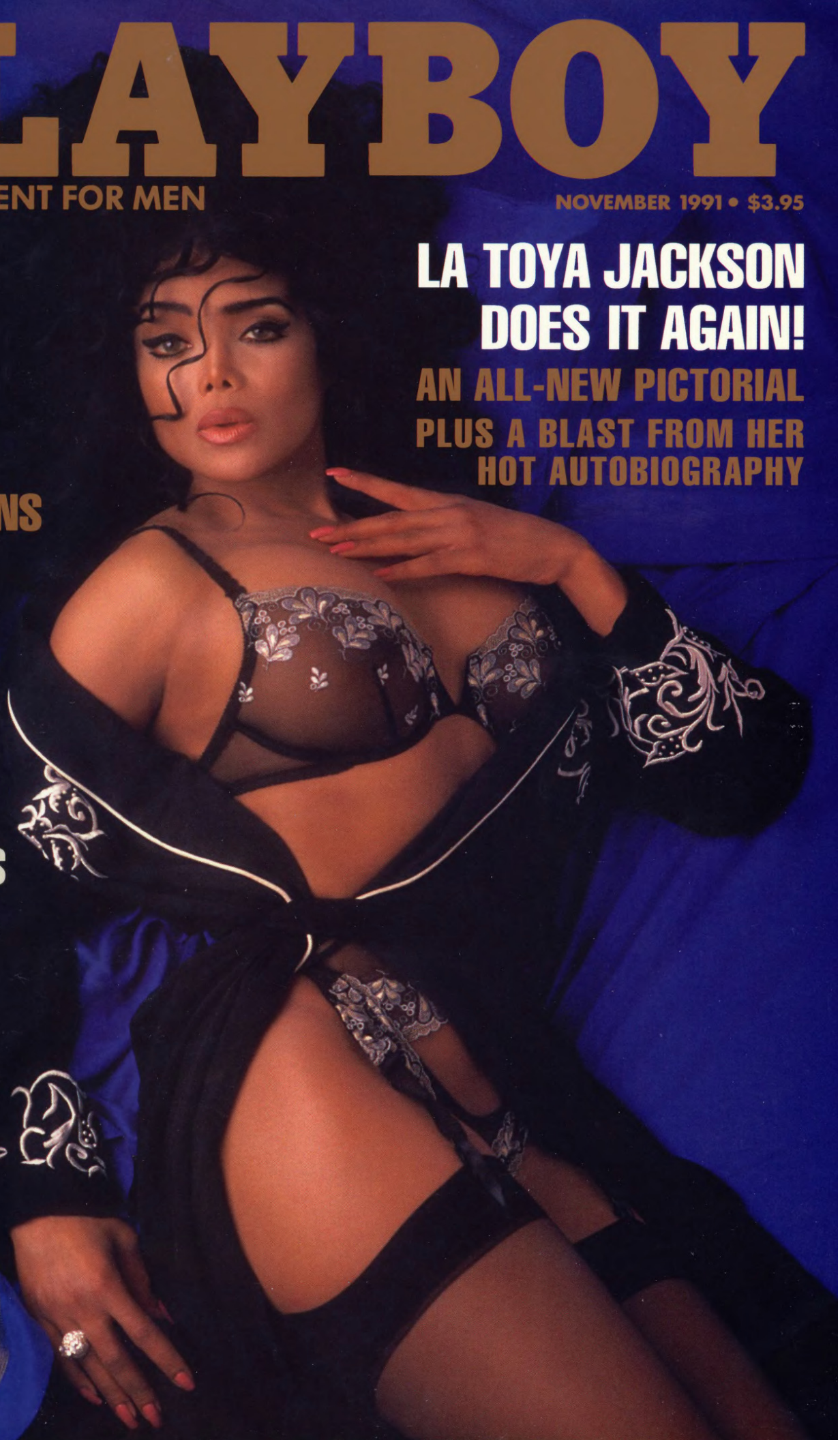

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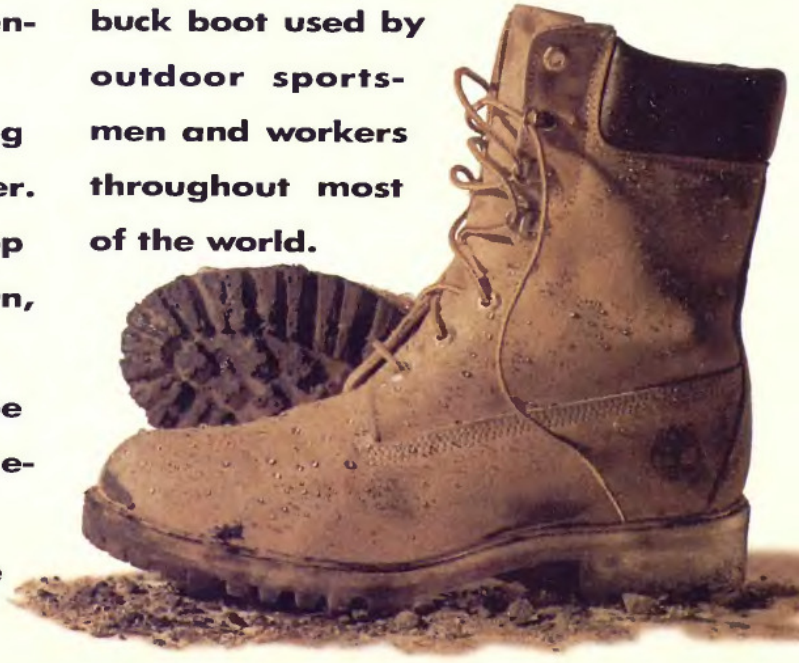

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like any other dinner party.

There were people I didn't know. People I didn't want to know. And people I knew that I wish I didn't know.

It just doesn't get any better than that.

Rebecca, the hostess, spotted me from the far end of the living room. A smile landed on her face, and she started to zoom toward me like a vacuum cleaner.

"Thanks for coming Gary let me take your coat," she recited.

"I wouldn't miss it for the world," I said.

In all honesty, though, I would have.

If Rebecca's dinner party were just flying through space somewhere, and the world happened to be passing by, make no mistake, I would jump onto it.

The living room was well-appointed. On one wall, there were bookshelves. All the books looked the same. I wondered if I pulled out the right one, whether it would swing the bookcase and myself into a completely different room.

In an effort to mingle, I walked over to a couple that looked like they could use some company. I introduced myself. We talked about what I did. What they did.

And it was over.

A clean break.

Next came the young woman I met on the subway last week. She was an old friend from college, and I was hoping she wouldn't see me. Just like I had hoped on the subway. But before I could do anything about it, we were engaged in a conversation about the good old days. I actually didn't mind it.

But it was identical to the conversation we had previously.

It was a rerun.

After it was over, she smiled, and said "It was nice running into you Gary, maybe I'll see you on the subway again."

I told her I wasn't ready to make that kind of commitment.

Perhaps what bothered me most about Rebecca's dinner party, though, was Burt's nose.

It wasn't that it was the size of an atrium.

I could live with the fact that it swooped up most of the air conditioning in the room.

The part that really got to me was that all the guests had to duck every time Burt turned his head.

Like the boom on a sail boat was coming around.

It was especially inconvenient for the hired waiters serving hors d'oeuvres.

They thought it would be an easy way to make a buck, not a hazardous one.

All the couch seating was taken. As always is at these dinner parties. The people sitting on the couch looked like they arrived extra early, and slept outside in hopes of getting the very best tickets.

To say they weren't about to get up goes without saying.

One guy was sitting between two women. Bobbing his head in an I'm-the-most-handsome-gameshow-host-that-ever-lived kind of way.

He was the kind of man that you'd expect to see walking through heaven someday with a floozy on each arm.

But for now, he was occupying a spot I wouldn't mind being in.

It would be great, if all of a sudden, he put his arms around the women, and slid right off the plastic that was covering the couch and onto the floor.

Or if someone pressed a button that hoisted him up toward the ceiling in a net. To see him flapping around like a caught fish would be nothing less than splendid.

It was time for dinner to be served.

The time when the hostess, Rebecca, proudly parted the doors to her dining room, so that everyone could pass through.

As though it were the Red Sea.

While everyone filtered into the room, someone tugged my hand from behind.

It was Penelope Parker.

An art director I used to work with at an advertising agency. She looked very attractive. Long flowing dark hair, a tall slender body.

Only one thing bothered me about her brilliant green eyes. There was nothing behind them.

Penelope could do anything she put her writer's mind to.

That's how she made it anywhere.

"Gary, fancy meeting you here," she said opportunistically.

"Well, if it isn't Penelope Parker," I stated, wishing it weren't.

From that moment on, I knew who I'd be spending the rest of the dinner party with. She always had a thing for me.

We sat next to each other at the table.

She was capable of going on about nothing in particular quite well.

According to her, I would imagine,

WE THINK Mob boss and picture Marlon Brando. We think famine and the image of an emaciated African child appears. We are inundated with data, and it has become easier to store information as image: the picture-worth-a-thousand-bytes syndrome. But seeing *The Godfather* is nothing like knowing the reality of the complex world of the Mafia. Inside the brotherhood of organized crime, *Time* investigative reporter **Richard Behar** finds an organization *In the Grip of Treachery* when he interrogates **Nicholas "The Crow" Caramandi.** Not since Joe Valachi flipped three decades ago has one man done so much damage to the Mob. In his testimony, Caramandi presents a startling and brutal picture of life in the Philadelphia family. The illustration is by **Mike Benny.**

Feeding that starving Ethiopian child should be easy, right? Just send food or, maybe, as **Sam Kinison** says, "Tell 'em to move: They live in a desert." Looking behind the easy and coldhearted attempts to solve the recurring African famines, Contributing Editor **Denis Boyles,** in *An Entirely Man-Made Disaster*, discovers a world of food surpluses, political infighting at the UN and black-market operators who sell their countrymen's lives for a quick profit. The gaunt figures and lonely landscapes of **Rafal Olbinski's** paintings capture the real tragedy of playing God in Africa.

**Sean Penn** is a new man, a calm, mild-mannered father and director; no more photographer bashing. Or at least that's what he claims in this month's *Playboy Interview* by Contributing Editor **David Rensin. Julia Roberts,** on the other hand, is a media darling, and we can see why after her candid talk in *20 Questions* about her Southern drawl, sex and on-location relationships.

OK, so you won't find a Roberts film in *Sex in Cinema 1991*, with text by Contributing Editor **Bruce Williamson.** What you will find in this year's roundup are a steamy picture from **Madonna's** *Truth or Dare* documentary and one of **Warren Beatty's** current flame, **Annette Bening,** in *The Grifters*. On a sadder note, as we were closing this issue, word reached us of the death in Australia of **Arthur Knight,** author of the *Sex in Cinema* series for its first two decades.

In his *Reporter's Notebook*: "A Killer of a Debate," **Robert Scheer** points out the essential hypocrisy of the pro-lifers' position—that abortion is a kind of murder that's permissible when certain rules are followed.

Everyone has a favorite image of **La Toya Jackson** after her first *Playboy* appearance, but Contributing Photographer **Stephen Wayda** and West Coast Photo Editor **Marilyn Grabowski** figured they'd give us some more options. Accompanying the pictures is an excerpt from *La Toya: Growing Up in the Jackson Family* (to be published by Dutton, an imprint of New American Library, a Division of Penguin Books USA Inc.). Ogling La Toya's pics, incidentally, almost made "Ted Kennedy's Top Ten Party Tips," just one of the goodies in **David Letterman's** *Top Top Ten Lists*. It's an excerpt from the book to be published by Pocket Books.

Our fiction this month is *Bottoms Up*, by **Marshall Boswell** (illustrated by **Brad Holland**). It's about a guy who has some surprises in store when he moves next door to a pair of odd-couple strippers. As part of *Playboy's Electronic Roundup*, half of film's odd-couple critics, **Roger Ebert,** weighs in with a discourse on the virtues of laser discs. Also: Don't miss our fashion report on mail-order shopping. Once the domain of the terminally uncool, catalog clothes have become surprisingly hot. When you've honed your image, you're ready to meet Miss November, **Tonja Christensen,** whose pictures are worth much more than the proverbial thousand words.

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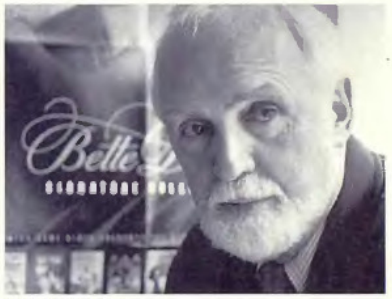
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**Playboy** (ISSN 0032-1478), November 1991, volume 38, number 11. Published monthly by Playboy in national and regional editions, Playboy, 680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611. Second-class postage paid at Chicago, Illinois, and at additional mailing offices. Subscriptions: in the U.S., $29.97 for 12 issues. Postmaster: Send address change to Playboy, P.O. Box 2007, Harlan, Iowa 51537-4007.

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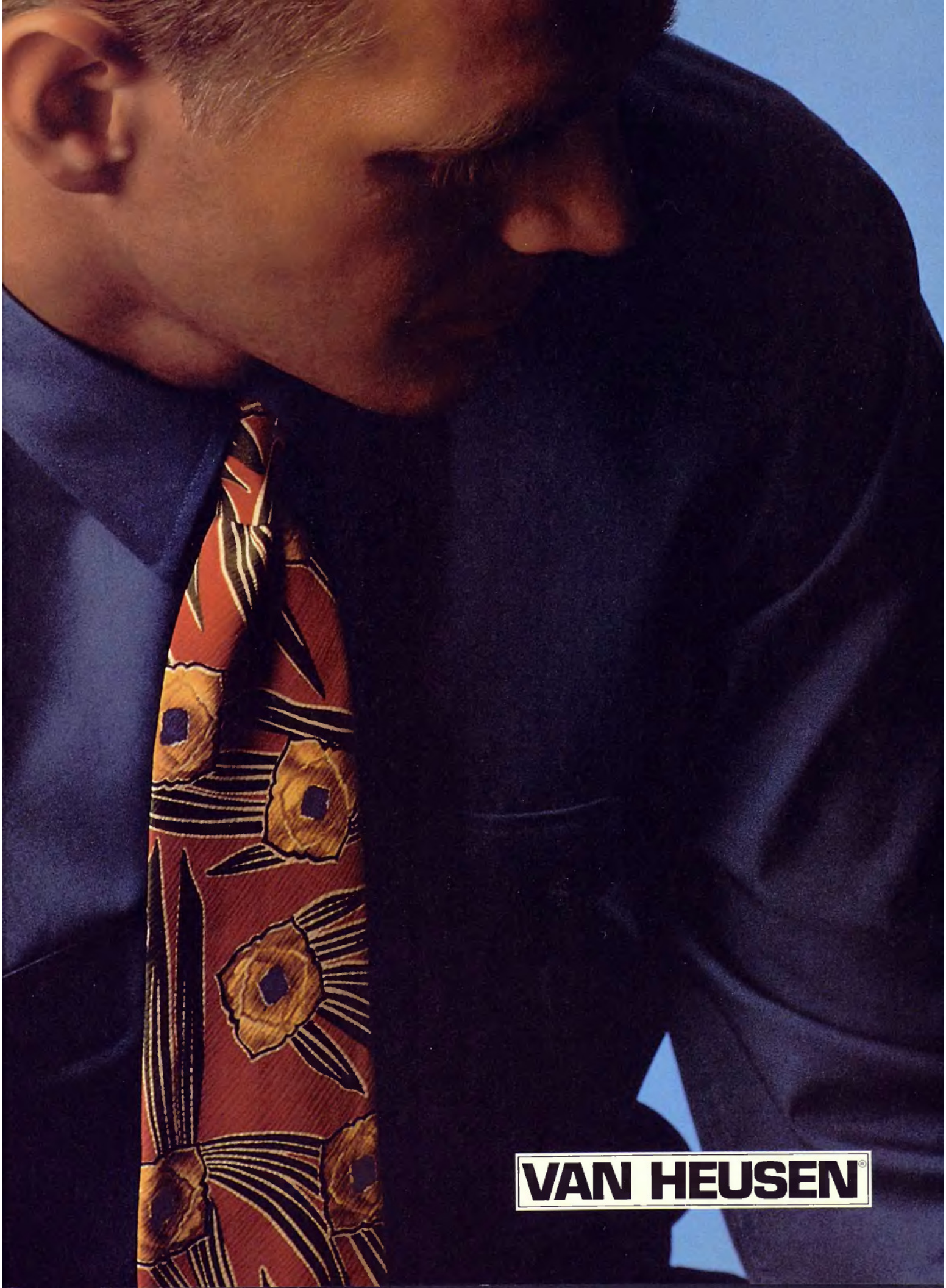
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vol. 38, no. 11—november 1991

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**COVER STORY**

She graced the pages of our March 1989 issue. Michael's sister La Toya is back, this time with a story to tell the world about how her thriller *Playboy* pictorial rocked the Jackson empire. Our cover was produced by West Coast Photo Editor Marilyn Grabowski, styled by Jennifer Smith-Ashley and shot by Contributing Photographer Stephen Woyda. Our thanks to Clint Wheat for Lo Toya's hoir ond make-up. And arm thot Rabbit!

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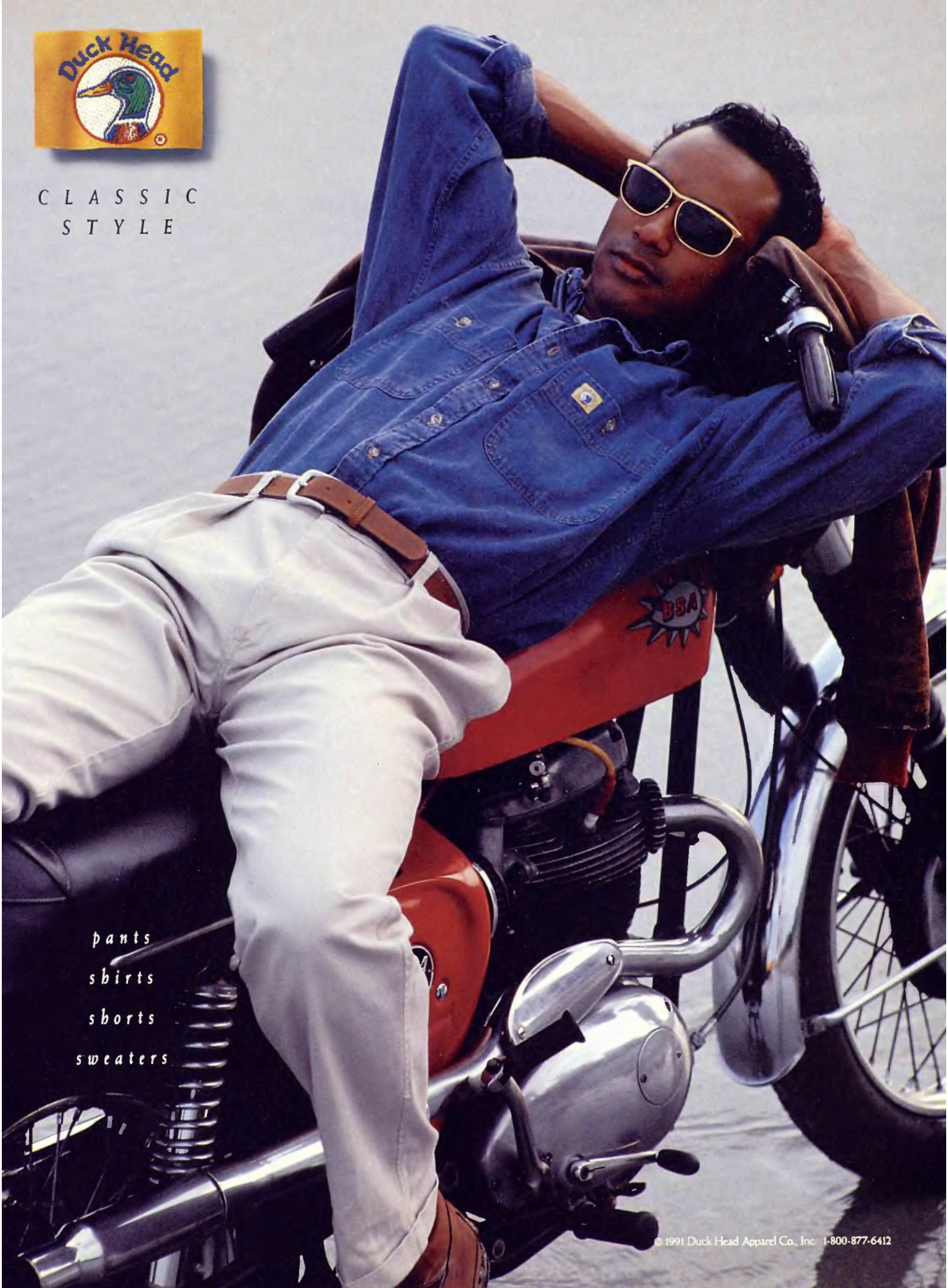
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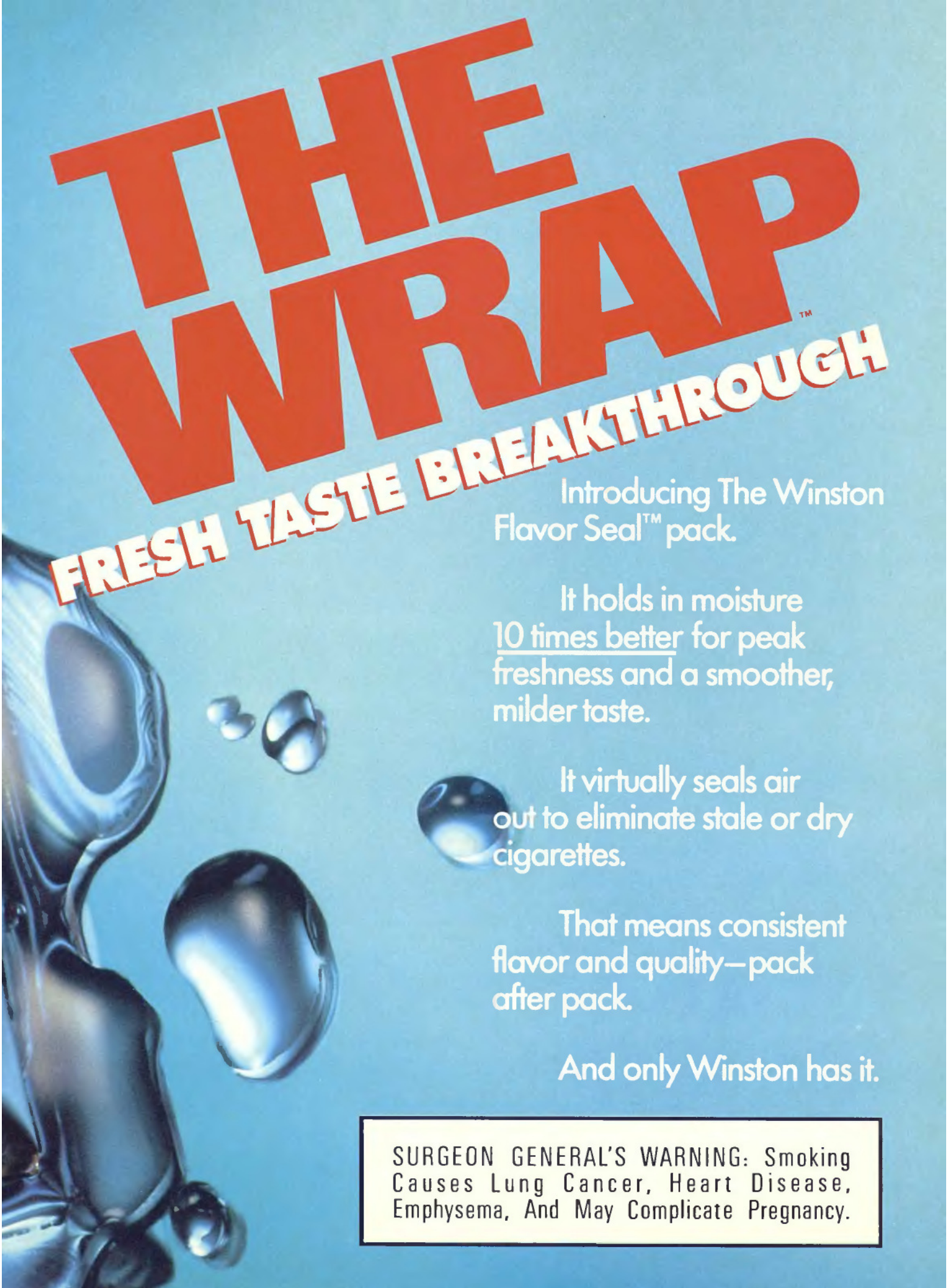
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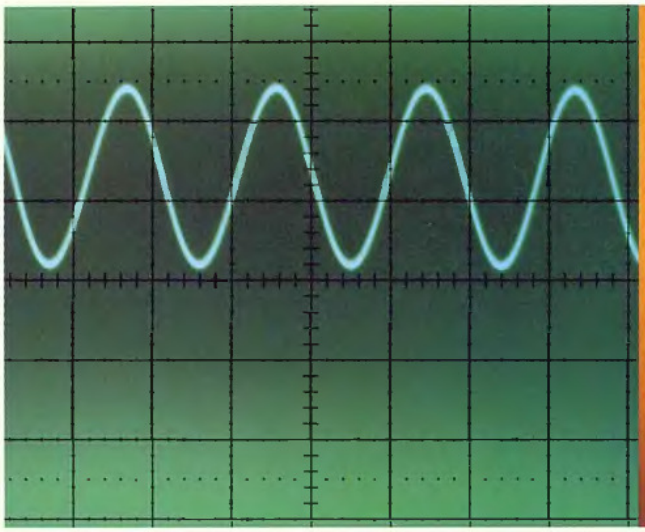

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# DEAR PLAYBOY

ADDRESS DEAR PLAYBOY
PLAYBOY MAGAZINE
680 NORTH LAKE SHORE DRIVE
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60611

### DARYL GATES INTERVIEW

I enjoyed your *Playboy Interview* with Los Angeles police chief Daryl Gates in the August issue, but police brutality has now become endemic.

It's endemic because it takes a special person to be a policeman in the first place: He's a no-nonsense, gung-ho, shoot-from-the-hip, battling type of guy. That's the kind we need on the police force. A Milquetoast won't do.

But this particular type of guy has to be corralled and trained or the natural instincts for which he's hired will take over—and they have, increasingly.

What to do? Let's get and keep the same kind of guy *but* give him proper training, mental as well as physical, and regard for restraint. So Chief Gates in Los Angeles *is* ultimately responsible for the training, or the lack of it, which in law is called *respondeat superior*. If anything goes wrong, it's the fellow in charge who's responsible.

I'm not a cop hater. In fact, I'm a cop lover. I've represented the police and fire departments in San Francisco and other cities for a number of years.

On the other hand, I represented the family of a drugged itinerant in North Las Vegas who died after being taken to jail and left unattended in a cell for eight hours. I was told by a source in the medical examiner's office that the failure to provide medical treatment contributed to his death.

We settled the case for the largest amount of its kind in North Las Vegas history. But what's more important, I have a copy of a letter from the mayor of North Las Vegas and the North Las Vegas chief of police apologizing for what happened—and, even more important, saying that they had changed the system of care for arrested indigents from that existing at the time of my client's arrest.

That letter is on the wall in my office and I'm prouder of it than of any verdict I've ever won, because it shows that there's a needed therapy that a good tort suit can provide!

I also represent the family of a Native American in Arizona who was shot to death by the police; and in Compton, just outside Los Angeles, we're going to trial on a worse case than the Rodney King affair. I represent the family of two brothers, royal Samoans, who were shot in the back and killed.

We have other cases of police brutality around the country awaiting trial, so, yes, police brutality does exist. Still, the police are our finest. We need them. We also need supervisors and chiefs of police who'll give this special breed of vigorous manhood training in the art of restraint.

Melvin M. Belli
San Francisco, California

Congratulations to Diane K. Shah for her very fair interview of Los Angeles police chief Daryl Gates. As a resident of the Los Angeles area for more than 50 years, I can assure you that most law-abiding citizens appreciate the job Chief Gates has done and pray that he won't resign. God forbid that Mayor Tom Bradley and his ilk take over!

Bert J. Finburgh
Glendale, California

*Why do we have an uncomfortable feeling, Bert, that you're using ilk as a euphemism?*

Daryl Gates is a smooth and slick police chief, all right, but does he really expect people to accept the fact that the city of Los Angeles has had to pay $23,000,000 in damages over the past five years to citizens who sued the L.A.P.D. for civil rights violations? Gates seems to imply that this is nothing out of the ordinary and just "police business as usual." He clearly exemplifies the cavalier attitude of all too many American police officers.

It is time for Daryl Gates to hang up

PLAYBOY, (ISSN 0032-1478), NOVEMBER 1991, VOLUME 38, NUMBER 11, PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY PLAYBOY, 680 NORTH LAKE SHORE DRIVE, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60611. SUBSCRIPTIONS: $29.97 FOR 12 ISSUES, U.S. CANADA, $43.97 FOR 12 ISSUES. ALL OTHER FOREIGN, $45 U.S. CURRENCY ONLY. FOR NEW AND RENEWAL ORDERS AND CHANGE OF ADDRESS, SEND TO PLAYBOY SUBSCRIPTIONS, P.O. BOX 2007, HARLAN, IOWA 51537-4007. PLEASE ALLOW 6-8 WEEKS FOR PROCESSING. FOR CHANGE OF ADDRESS, SEND NEW AND OLD ADDRESSES AND ALLOW 45 DAYS FOR CHANGE. POSTMASTER: SEND FORM 3579 TO PLAYBOY, P.O. BOX 2007, HARLAN, IOWA 51537-4007. ADVERTISING: NEW YORK: 747 THIRD AVENUE, NEW YORK 10017; CHICAGO: 680 NORTH LAKE SHORE DRIVE, CHICAGO 60611; WEST COAST: 8560 SUNSET BOULEVARD, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CA 90069; METROPOLITAN PUBLISHERS REPRESENTATIVES, INC.: ATLANTA: 3017 PIEDMONT ROAD NE, SUITE 100, ATLANTA, GA 30305; MIAMI: 2500 SOUTH DIXIE HIGHWAY, MIAMI, FL 33133; TAMPA: 3016 MASON PLACE, TAMPA, FL 33629.

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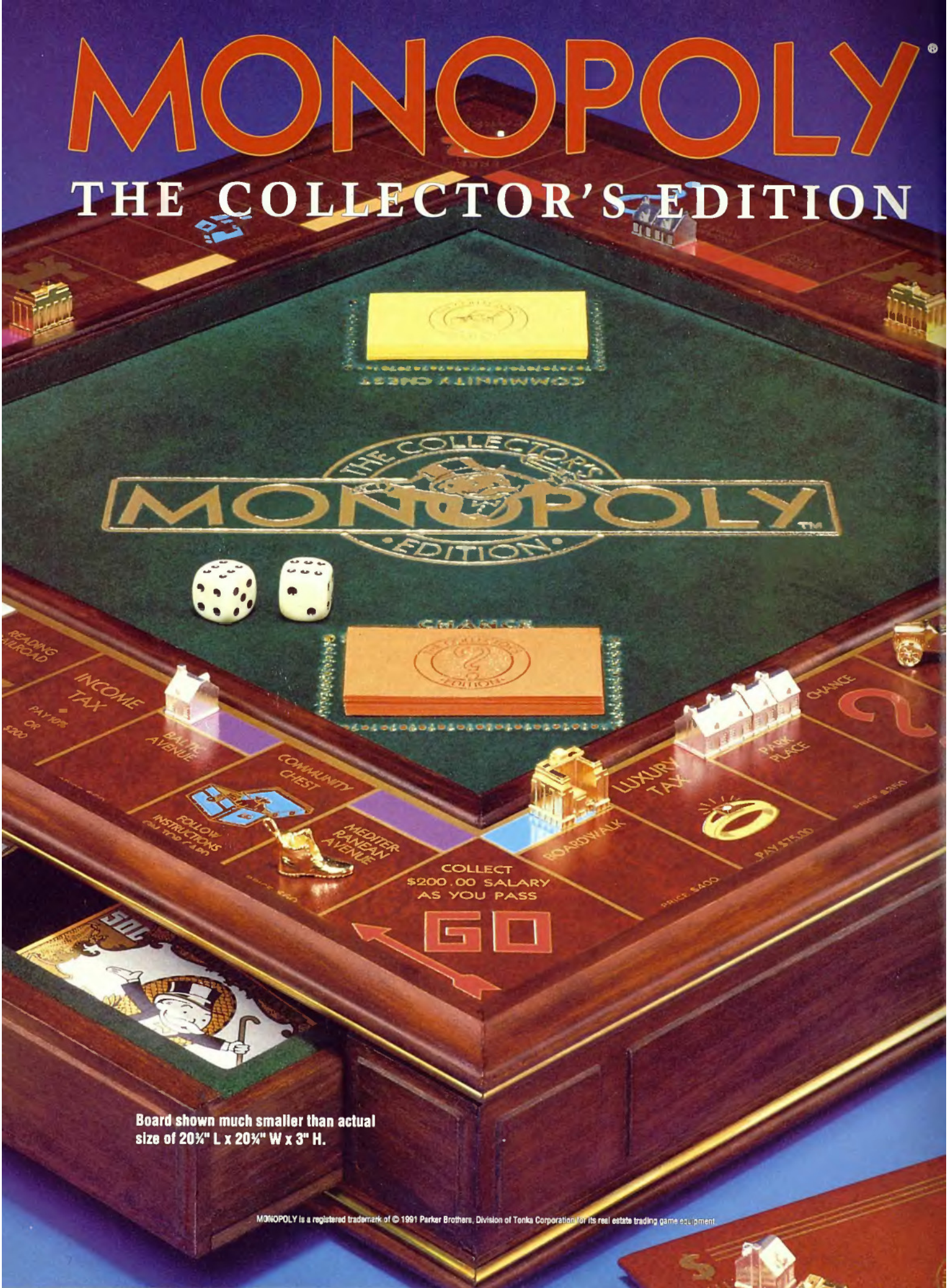


**Board shown much smaller than actual size of 20¾" L x 20¾" W x 3" H.**

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# The exclusive edition, richly embellished with sterling silver and 24 karat gold. Authorized and fully authenticated by Parker Bros.

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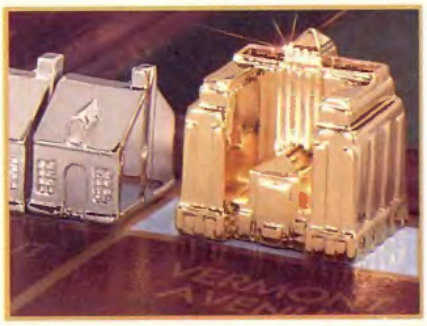

(shown larger than actual size)

Architecturally designed houses and hotels (shown here larger than actual size) are individually die-cast and accented with silver or gold.

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his six-shooter, turn in his badge and ride off into the sunset.

Peter Horne
Trenton, New Jersey

*As we go to press, Chief Gates has announced his intention to resign next spring, contingent on the naming of his successor.*

### "QUEEN NANCY"

I read Robert Scheer's *Reporter's Notebook* "Queen Nancy," in the August *Playboy* and was intrigued by his claim that my reporting on Maureen Reagan's 1980 birthday party for her dog Barnae was only "partially true." Scheer writes that he "did not hear Maureen and brother Michael chorus, as Kelley reports, that 'Nancy is First Dog.' Nor do I think they would have, since they were already sporting buttons that read BARNAE FOR FIRST DOG."

My information came directly from Narda Zacchino (a.k.a. Mrs. Robert Scheer) in an interview with her on March 11, 1989. Zacchino attended the birthday party with her husband and reported to me (and others) what she heard directly from Maureen and Michael Reagan.

Kitty Kelley
Washington, D.C.

*Scheer replies: What a sexist response. Don't I have a brain and a voice? I, not my wife, am the person mentioned in Kelley's book as being present at the party. Why didn't she cite Narda Zacchino (who has never been known as Mrs. Robert Scheer) in the book if she was really the source of the anecdote?*

*To repeat: I did not hear Nancy Reagan's stepchildren make the statement attributed to them and, in fact, their joke was even better. They wanted to run the dog for First Lady, but the position was already promised to Nancy. What I still don't get is why everybody, Reagan children and Kelley included, always picks on poor Nancy, when she was clearly the better half of the Presidential team.*

### CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'

The August *Playboy*'s *California Dreamin'* pictorial is nothing less than a Playmate Hunt of the Blonde Kind. I hope we'll see some of those beautiful ladies in your next annual *Playmate Review*.

Serge Brouillar
Sorel, Quebec

I viewed *California Dreamin'* with mixed emotions. Great photos of fantastic blondes, but I'm afraid it will cause wide-eyed rubes from the South and the Midwest to think about piling into their vans and heading to California in search of fabulous blonde *femmes*. To these guys I say, *Please don't do it!* There aren't enough to go around for us natives.

Dave Aeschilman
Concord, California

### GREAT COVERS NEVER DIE

I was delighted and surprised by the cover of the August *Playboy*. I immediately recognized it as a remake of a cover produced in the mid-Sixties. It brought back pleasant memories of my college years and of one of my favorite Playmates. However, I was surprised to see that in your *Cover Story*, there was no mention of the cover and the model from two decades earlier. Would it be possible for you to give us another look at it?

George O. Proper
Albany, California

*Several other readers whose memories are as good as yours wrote in to ask the same question, George. The concept of the Rabbit drawn in lipstick on a lovely model's stomach first appeared on the July 1964 cover. The model was Cynthia Maddox, who was never a Playmate but began her long association with Playboy as a Bunny. She appeared on several covers in the Sixties and worked for a time as Hef's Assistant Cartoon Editor. Another ex-Bunny, Candy Collins, struck a similar pose for our February 1979 issue, before becoming our December Playmate that same year.*

### WILD CHILD

*Playboy* has achieved a coup with its pictorial on Amanda de Cadenet (*Yesterday's Wild Child*) in the August issue. In five black-and-white photos, Bob Carlos Clarke extracts the intelligence and eroticism of this beautiful woman.

Eric Litra
Columbia, South Carolina

### HOT STUFF

I enjoyed John Oldcastle's *Great Bowls of Fire* (*Playboy*, August) and the sidebar *Playboy's Guide to the Hot Stuff*. I collect hot sauces and have approximately 270 labels, of which about 125 are Louisiana brands. Please note that at some point, hot becomes too hot to taste anything but fire and one cannot enjoy the sauce.

Ed Wynne, Jr.
Lafayette, Louisiana

*Playboy's Guide to the Hot Stuff* covers North American hot sauces quite well but omits several mainstays of cuisines of other continents: *kochujang* (Korea), Szechwan fermented-chili purée (with or without beans), *sambal oelek* (Indonesia), *harissa* (North Africa) and *shatta* (Middle East). All are easy to find in large cities with diverse populations such as Chicago.

James D. McCawley
Chicago, Illinois

### LENNY LIVES!

I really appreciated Joe Morgenstern's article *Lenny Lives!* in your August issue. I discovered Lenny Bruce back in 1968, when I began my life as a university student. He opened my eyes and heart to injustice and to the possibility of a better world. He made me laugh and he made me angry. I still laugh and I'm still angry. Thank you, Joe and *Playboy*, for carrying the torch.

Lionel Rumm
Thornhill, Ontario

Thank you for Joe Morgenstern's *Lenny Lives!* I can only hope that the article will open the ears of a new generation of Lenny Bruce fans.

Bruce deserves to be remembered, along with Bob Dylan, Jack Kerouac and Charlie Parker, as a genius of the mid–20th Century.

James J. J. Wilson
Evanston, Illinois

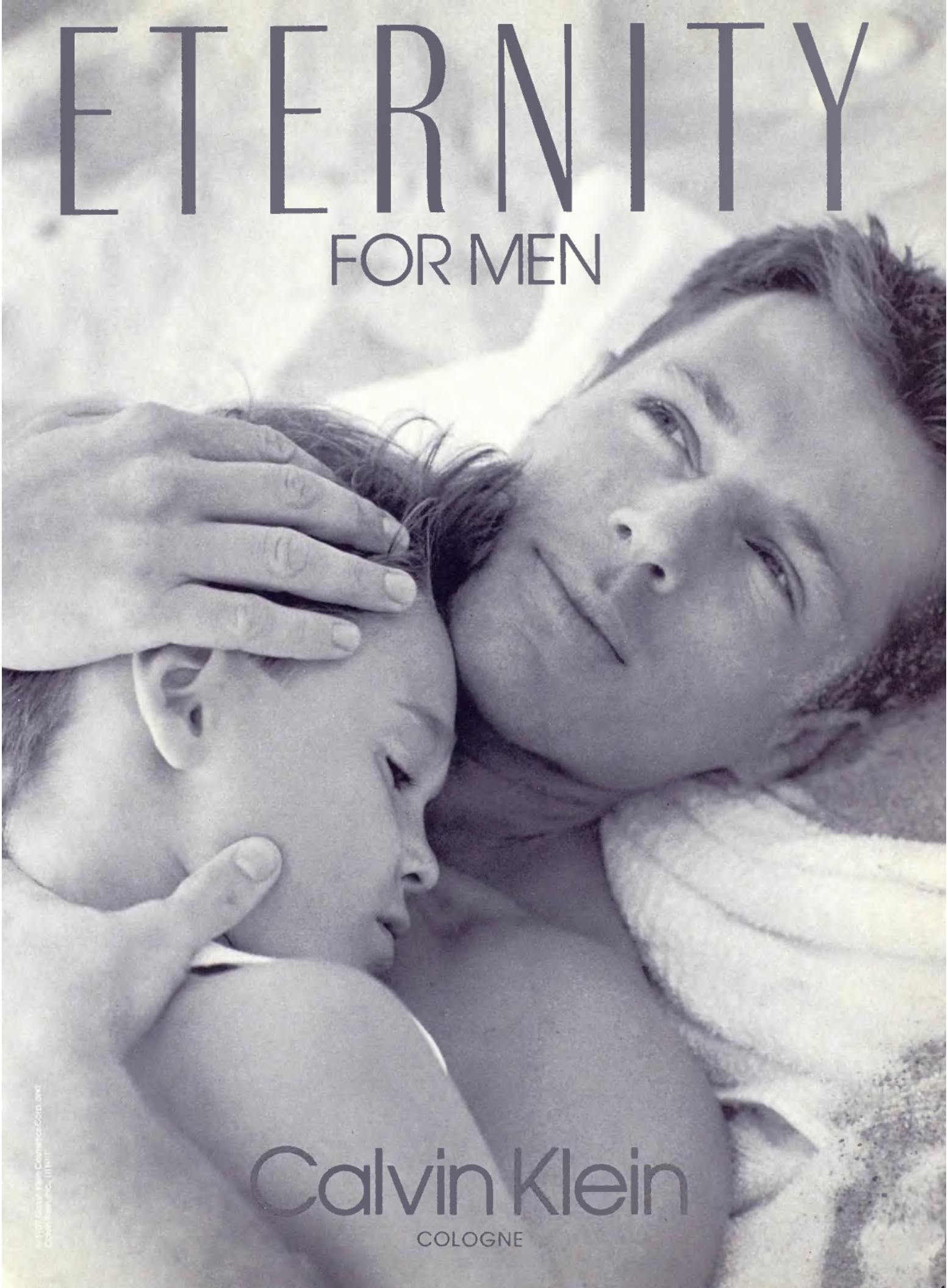
### DEPARTMENT OF REBUTTALS

I could hardly believe the letter in the August *Dear Playboy* from John Bryant that attempts to defend bigotry and prejudice. Earth's population is almost five and a half billion and growing. There's no way that different cultures can avoid associating with one another. Where they don't coexist, as in the Middle East, war often breaks out. Bryant's statement that bigotry and prejudice slow "intermarriage with unproven genes" smacks of Nazi eugenics.

Lee Helms
Rochester Hills, Michigan

Letter writer Vito Verga's assertion in the August *Dear Playboy* that eliminating cash would eliminate crime is naïve at best. If cash became unavailable, criminals would simply adapt to the new system. At the lower levels, they would engage in barter, as many already do (for example, trading sex for drugs). At higher levels, organized crime would use computer technology to deal in fraudulent debit and credit transactions. Crime has many causes, including poverty, greed and sociopathology. Merely changing the means of exchange will not eliminate those problems.

Rosemary West
Mission Hills, California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# PLAYBOY AFTER HOURS

### STROKING THE BOSS

You're playing golf with your boss and you wanna hit him up for a raise. Do you let him win?

That's the sort of mental sand trap instructors address at Powergolf, a seminar designed to give a leg up to the 3,000,000 American corporate climbers who, in a recent survey, said they golf for business reasons. Powergolf—a classroom series that takes occasional field trips to the links—divides the golf course into "power zones": Holes one through six are for "foundation building," seven through 12 for "relationship building" and 13 through 18 for "alliance building." Each zone is further divided into red, yellow and green areas. (Hint: If you know not to press a client about an order of widgets after he has blown a three-foot putt, you have a good idea of what a red zone is all about.) The seminar then doglegs through a woody thicket of behavioral-psych buzz words—often taking you farther from the game of golf than a hook shot into a strong wind. In "Who Are You?" for example, you're taught to associate basic shapes—boxes, rectangles, triangles, circles and squiggles—with the personalities of potential clients. Master this concept, claim the power pros, and you can "power flex" your way into the board room by knowing when to ask such strategic questions as "How long have you been playing golf, Bob?" and "How is this economy treating you, Bob?" At the very least, Bob will buy a round of brews for you at the 19th hole—maybe.

A one-day seminar lightens your wallet by $199; a weekend, including meals, lessons and a round, costs $449. On the other hand, the Ralph-takes-the-boss-golfing episode of *The Honeymooners* rents for about three bucks.

### LEMMING AID

From the person in our office who converted us to desktop publishing—and now has free time for computer games—we received the following message:

"It started out innocently enough. I picked up a game called Lemmings (from Psygnosis Ltd., 29 Saint Mary's Court, Brookline, Massachusetts 02146). I read the warning on the package: 'We are not responsible for: loss of sanity. . . .'

"I started at the 'fun' level. The object? Help all the lemmings wend their way through perilous terrain until they reach the sea, where they commit suicide en masse. If they die before their time, they never make it to lemming heaven.

"First, I gave some of the lemmings the ability to build bridges; I furnished others with umbrellas so they could float; then I provided pickaxes so they could dig. I soon became hypnotized as the 'blocker' lemmings tapped their tiny feet and tried to save their buddies from plunging to their death.

"At the next level, it became less obvious how to get the stupid lemmings to their destination. I had fewer tools and the little buggers were moving fast. Still, I persevered and zipped through the 30 'tricky' levels to the next plateau, 'taxing.' Suddenly, lemmings were everywhere, falling into oblivion, being smashed by doomsday machines. But I carried on.

ILLUSTRATION BY PATER SATO

"These days, I'm at the 'mayhem' level. And I'm going to stop right after I pass through it. At least that's what I've been saying for the past few days. I hope I'm not rambling—see, I haven't slept in a while, I need to pick up my laundry and I've forgotten when the November issue is due. And I really should call my mother back. And. . . ."

### DON'T BELIEVE WHAT YOU READ (1)

A June 21, 1991, headline in the *Chicago Tribune*: "CAMPING ALLOWED FOR DEADHEADS."

A June 21, 1991, headline in the *Chicago Sun-Times*: "DEADHEADS WARNED: 'NO CAMPING IN SOLDIER FIELD.'"

### PUMP UP, FLARE OUT

Ever fantasize about removing fat from your middle and putting it where it counts? Stop dreaming: Dr. Ricardo Samitier, a plastic surgeon in Miami, is developing a procedure that uses body fat to thicken the circumference of a penis to almost *twice* its normal size. Working under the assumption that during intercourse women prefer thickness to length, Dr. Samitier performed his first "circumferential autologous penile engorgement" on a volunteer almost two years ago. Since then, he has operated on 15 other men and claims that his results keep getting better. On paper, the procedure is relatively simple: Using a local anesthetic, he liposucts fat from the patient's belly and injects it under the skin of the penis. Once there, the fat cells have a nearly 100 percent survival rate due to the penis' excellent blood supply (unlike the 50 to 75 percent rate for those breast implants that use human fat). Patients are then asked to abstain from sex for two weeks.

But that's the technical part; Samitier is equally concerned with aesthetics, carefully molding his re-created penises to keep them from looking like Ball Park franks. "I can make better contours [on the penis] than those on textured condoms," he says proudly.

And what has the doctor heard from

# RAW DATA

## SIGNIFICA, INSIGNIFICA, STATS AND FACTS

### QUOTE

"I'm the only announcer who can look the pros in the eyeballs and feel they don't tip more than I make per game."—COLLEGE-BASKETBALL COMMENTATOR AL MCGUIRE, ON WORKING N.B.A. GAMES FOR NBC

### WATER PRESSURE

Number of gallons of water flushed through toilets every day in the U.S.: 4.8 billion.

•

Average number of gallons flushed in a standard toilet, six; in a new ultra-low-flush type, 1.6.

•

Average number of gallons used to brush teeth, three; to take a four-minute shower, 20; to take an extra-long shower, 85; to wash hands, 2.6.

•

Gallons of mouthwash gargled each day: 69,000.

### SOPHOMORIC FANTASIES

In a study of college undergraduates published in the *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, percentage of men who said they become aroused daily when thinking about a particular person or at the sight and touch of their own bodies, 71.4; of women, 34. Men who do so once or twice a week, 24.5; women, 44.7.

•

Percentage of men who do not necessarily become aroused but have sexual thoughts at least once a day, 100; of women, 71.7.

### BOX STUFFERS

According to Bruskin Associates, number of pieces of junk mail that the average American receives each week, 14. Percentage that is opened and read: 54.

### FACT OF THE MONTH

According to current studies of the frequency of intercourse at various ages, an American woman has sex an average of 2843 times during her reproductive years.

### FUTURE CHARGE

Efficiency, in percentage, of a car engine in converting gas into propulsion, 15; efficiency of the electric motor in the GM Impact, a two-seat subcompact prototype, 90 to 95.

•

Impact's highest possible speed, 110 mph. Top speed as limited by electronic governor, 75 mph.

•

Number of seconds it takes for the Impact to accelerate from zero to 60 miles per hour: eight.

•

Number of miles the Impact can travel at 55 mph before recharging: 120.

•

Number of A.C. induction motors in the Impact: two. Weight of each motor: 50 pounds. Horsepower for each motor: 57.

•

Number of ten-volt lead-acid batteries used to power the Impact's motors: 32. Weight of this battery pack: 870 pounds.

•

Impact's gross weight, 2550 pounds; length, 13.5 feet; width, 5.6 feet; height, 3.9 feet.

•

Amount of pollution from the exhaust of the Impact: zero.

### TALE OF THE TAPE

According to *Adult Video News* surveys, number of sexually explicit video tapes released in 1990 in the U.S.: 1275.

•

Number of rentals in 1989 from general video stores: 395,000,000. Amount spent for rentals and sales: $992,000,000. —BETTY SCHAAL

his test subjects? Patient number two, a 32-year-old lease negotiator from Florida, says, "I have trouble fitting into a normal-sized condom." But overall, is he happy? Is his girlfriend happy? Did he have to change the way he walks? "Yes, yes and no."

If you think this is an amazing breakthrough, so do the experts. Dr. Richard T. Caleel, former president of the American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery, says, "It sounds hazardous. There's really no place in the penis to put fat. And fat implants are temporary. Some may remain," he notes, "but if he's claiming that a significant portion of the fat takes, he should publish right away."

Samitier plans to do just that. He'll monitor his patients and, if all goes well, present his findings at the academy's January 1992 world conference in L.A.

### DON'T BELIEVE WHAT YOU READ (2)

A June 21, 1991, headline in the *Chicago Tribune*: "C.T.A. TARGETS BUS CRIME ON TWO LINES."

A June 21, 1991, headline in the *Chicago Sun-Times*: "COPS CALL C.T.A. 'SAFE' DESPITE RISE IN CRIME."

### HOLLYWOOD HAIKU

The Writer's Guild of America computer bulletin board flowered into poetry recently—borrowing the three-line, five-seven-five-syllable distribution of the traditional Japanese verse style. Here are our favorites:

*Alas, poor chieftain*
*"Left to pursue indie prod"*
*Freeze frame, roll credits*

R. MANNING

*Five percent of Net*
*Rewrite team gets full credit*
*Don't quit your day job*

D. ARNOTT

*Ohhh baby baby*
*mf mf mf mf mf O GOD!*
*NC-17*

R. MANNING

*Your script is flawless*
*Poignant. Funny. True. Perfect*
*Here are our notes*

D. ARNOTT

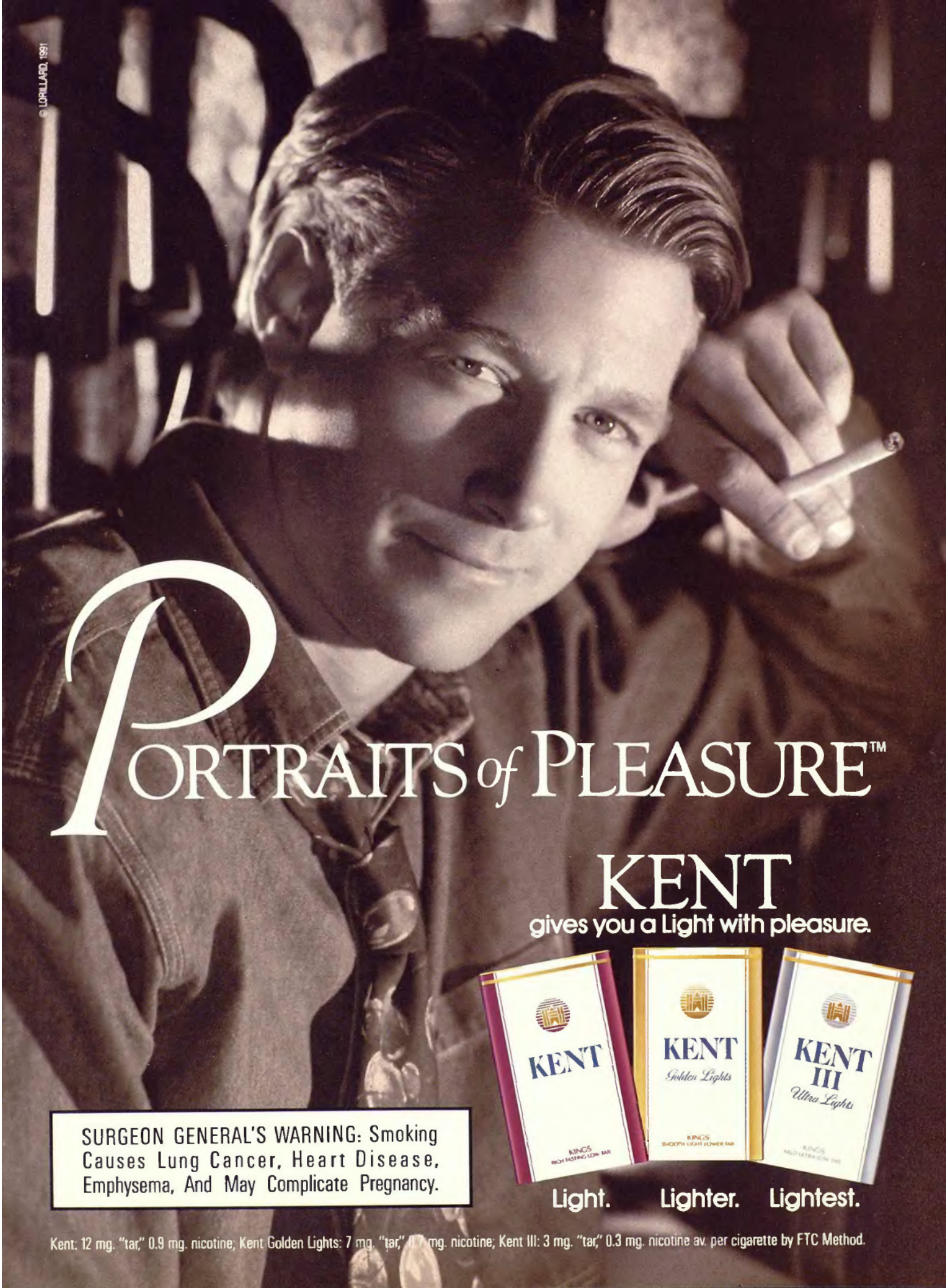
### DON'T BELIEVE WHAT YOU READ (3)

A June 21, 1991, headline in the *Chicago Tribune*: "CHICAGO PUBLISHER LOSES BID FOR CHEEVER BOOK."

A June 21, 1991, headline in the *Chicago Sun-Times*: "COURT OKS PUBLICATION OF CHEEVER BOOK."

### MOOSE ON THE LOOSE

The majestic moose is making a comeback in the forests of Northern U.S. states after nearly a century of decline due to overhunting, logging, development and disease. However, a comparative shortage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Light. Lighter. Lightest.
SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, And May Complicate Pregnancy.
Kent: 12 mg. "tar," 0.9 mg. nicotine; Kent Golden Lights: 7 mg. "tar," 0.7 mg. nicotine; Kent III: 3 mg. "tar," 0.3 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC Method.

of females has prompted some bull moose to wander in search of companionship during the fall rut.

In Maine, Vermont and New York, dairy farmers report increasing assaults on their herds by horny bulls. The odd couplings aren't as odd as they sound: Moose and cows are distantly related. But attempts at copulation between the species are doomed, mainly because of the bull's immense size. "When a moose tries to mount a cow," a New York educator explains, "the equipment just doesn't match."

But that doesn't stop Mr. Moose. In Shrewsbury, Vermont, a persistent bull courted a comely Hereford named Jessica for more than two months, chasing off the farmer and attracting thousands of tourists. In Upstate New York, another bull moose, known as the Humongous Heifer Humper, claimed an entire herd of Holsteins as his harem. Although he has been tranquilized and relocated several times by wildlife officers, the big guy continues to play the field at other dairy farms, wreaking udder havoc.

*Aren't you tired of buying an appliance or an electronic gadget and then having to fill out a warranty card? You know, the kind with all the data for market research? Just imagine if the military used those cards. We did.*

# NEW WORLD ORDER FORM

Congratulations on your acquisition of (circle appropriate item[s]): AH-64 Apache helicopters, GBU smart bombs, E-3 AWACS aircraft, F-18 fighter jets, M2/M3 Bradley Fighting Vehicles, Patriot antimissile missiles, other _____. We're pleased you chose American War Materiel for your arsenal.

Please fill out and return this consumer-information card so we can continue to meet your peace-keeping needs.

1. Describe your country or organization.
   A. Democracy (Western, struggling, plucky little)
   B. Dictatorship (military, feudal, totalitarian)
   C. Freedom fighters
   D. Hobbyists
2. How did you first learn about American War Materiel?
   A. Free samples
   B. Saw it massed on our borders
   C. Heard other countries talking about it at UN
   D. It landed on us
3. What factors influenced your decision to buy AWM?
   A. Performance on CNN
   B. Compatible with current stock pile
   C. Easy to assemble
   D. Lost confidence in competitor's product
4. How did you acquire your American War Materiel?
   A. Captured it
   B. Lobbied Congress for it
   C. Joined arms-for-hostages plan
   D. Handed over millions in shopping bags to some guy named Joe
5. How do you intend to use your American War Materiel?
   A. Defense only
   B. Suppress minorities and crush rebellions
   C. Parade down boulevard on national holiday
   D. Impress girls
6. What best describes your relationship with the United States?
   A. Friend (independent, reluctant, lap dog)
   B. Foe (implacable, on paper only, new Hitler)
   C. Former friend, now foe
   D. Former foe, was briefly a friend, then a foe, then a friend again, then was invaded by U.S., became a good friend but currently pouting
7. What improvements would you like to see in American War Materiel?
   A. Give larger discounts for Fifties-era hardware
   B. Accept Scuds as trade-ins
   C. Publish owner's manual in native language
   D. Offer matching luggage

(American War Materiel is manufactured for use inside purchaser's boundaries. Any exceptions must be approved in writing by the Secretary of State, Washington, D.C.)

## BUSINESS BERLITZ

Don't know what your boss is talking about? Here's help:

*A survey is being made of this:* I need more time to think of an answer.

*Administrative oversight":* I screwed up.

*Research efforts are under way:* I'm trying to find the file.

*Use your own discretion:* Stick your neck out; see if I care.

*I have taken your proposal under consideration:* I'll agree to it just as soon as hell freezes over.

*There's a growing body of opinion:* Two managers agree.

*It's a widely held opinion:* Three managers agree.

*Present indications are . . . :* One wild guess is as good as another.

*Where are we now?:* What am I doing here, anyway?

*How did we get here?:* Who is responsible, and why does he have a better company car?

*The above translations come courtesy of Centennial Press, publisher of "Bluffer's Guides."*

## MORE DISGUSTING NEWS FROM THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

We admit that we haven't kept up our subscription to *Audubon*, so it shouldn't have surprised us to come across an account of the booming business in slime eels that ran in a recent issue. But we were struck with the thought that this is *not* our father's *Audubon*.

Slime eels, the article tells us, are deepwater scavengers that like to enter dead bodies (fish, human, whatever) on the ocean floor through the mouth, gills or anus, then eat everything except the bones and skin. Needless to say, slime eels have, over time, tarnished the romantic prospect of a burial at sea.

These eels get their nickname from their defense mechanism, which pours out quantities of slime disproportionate to their size. One of these guys can fill a two-gallon bucket. It can also tie itself in knots (the simple overhand is a favorite). *Audubon* asked: "Was there any wonder that fishermen would have problems with a wriggling, snakelike animal that was phallic in color and shape and produced copious quantities of a substance distinctly resembling human semen? What if one also added that its eyeless, pink face—puckered, folded inward in a roughly star-shaped pattern—looked like a Pomeranian's anus?" This last phrase may be the starkest rhetorical question ever asked in a family-oriented nature magazine.

So how have big bucks entered the picture? In the late Seventies, South Korea perfected a process to tan the hide of slime eels into supple, rich pelts that have since been made into car-phone covers, $250 briefcases and $1000 golf bags. Retailers call this product Yuppie leather, which makes for especially appealing poetic justice: At last, a use for all the slime that arbitragers and other bottom-feeding scavengers have wrought.

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# JAZZ

## By NEIL TESSER

WHETHER OR NOT you think of jazz as the one true faith, you have to admit it's had its share of awe-inspiring icons. A perfect example of jazz culthood was long ago conferred upon saxophonist John Coltrane, whose later music radiated a potent spiritualism. (Some devotees in California once attempted to start a religion based on his music; his widow told them to stop.) Coltrane's chaotic, fulminant solos became a rallying point for fervid proponents, as well as critics, of the free-jazz avant-garde. You can make up your own mind with ***Live in Japan*** (GRP), which comprises four CDs but only six tracks—including a 57-minute version of *My Favorite Things*. Most of the music, recorded a year before Coltrane's death in 1967, has never been issued in the U.S., and it will bewilder listeners accustomed to the neat outlines of Wynton Marsalis and company, but parts of this set achieve the terrifying storm's-eye serenity Coltrane sought. Still, an easier place to start would be ***Blue Train,*** his classic postbop sextet date: Originally recorded for Blue Note, it's now out on an audiophile CD from Mobile Fidelity (P.O. Box 1657, Sebastopol, California 95473).

When it comes to deification, though, no jazz musician will ever rise above alto saxist Charlie "Bird" Parker, whose short lifetime gave birth to bebop and whose death in 1955 prompted graffiti scrawls of BIRD LIVES. Parker was the greatest improviser in jazz history, and his genius led one early fan to record him in performance on both coasts, using a primitive tape machine to isolate just the saxophonist's solos. Those legendary recordings have been spruced up and transferred to seven CDs in ***The Complete Dean Benedetti Recordings of Charlie Parker*** (Mosaic Records, mail order only: 35 Melrose Place, Stamford, Connecticut 06902). This long-awaited compilation defies casual listening but invites scholarship: Rather than entire songs, you hear only the snippets on which Bird plays. It's a carton of golden eggs.

Jazz musicians have been singing Parker's praises for 45 years; now Rolling Stone drummer Charlie Watts has stepped into the act with ***From One Charlie*** (Continuum). Featured is a quintet led by British saxist Peter King, and he and his sidemen cut the mustard; the problem lies with Watts, whose concept of bebop drumming is limp and soggy. Instead of defining the beat, he just reacts to it, making clumsy attempts at bebop's fiery, asymmetrical accents. Even the packaging is off the mark: This boxed set contains *just one* 28-minute CD, plus Watts's allegorical picture book about *Bird Charlie*, who didn't "sound the same as the other birds" and who "could not lay off the bad seeds." At least it's consistent: The book trivializes Parker's life in the same way that Watts's drumming trivializes bebop.

Jazz's awe-inspiring icons.

New and classic Coltrane, a Charlie Parker compilation, remembering Stan Getz.

The scaled-down working unit popularized by bebop helped usher out the big bands in the Fifties; now they're back, but with a difference. Take, for example, the Liberation Music Orchestra, led by bassist Charlie Haden. On ***Dream Keeper*** (Blue Note), the band's third and best album, Haden again devotes the jazz orchestra's resources to the protest music of the Third World; but there's also a suite combining Latin-American folk songs and Langston Hughes's poetry. Add the dynamite line-up—trumpeter Tom Harrell, saxist Branford Marsalis and trombonist Ray Anderson, among others—and you have an artistic *and* political triumph.

San Francisco pianist Jon Jang takes a complementary route with his Pan Asian Arkestra, tuning the jazz orchestra to the concerns of Asian Americans; the results shine forth on the remarkable ***Never Give Up!*** (AsianImprov, 5825 Telegraph Avenue #66, Oakland, California 94609). Jang has achieved a near-seamless blend of jazz and melodies from the Japanese and Chinese traditions, especially on the title work, a jazz concerto; he also offers a startling and indelible reinterpretation of *A Night in Tunisia*. Another San Franciscan, the saxist/pianist Peter Apfelbaum, weighs in with his 15-piece Hieroglyphics Ensemble on ***Signs of Life*** (Antilles). Imagine a world-music big band in which Sun Ra, Bob Marley, Hugh Masekela and Tito Puente get to trade fours, and you'll have an inkling of what this exotic and captivating outfit is about.

New jazz labels sprout up all the time, most often produced in someone's kitchen. But executive producer Ken Fujiwara has entered the field with a bumper crop of young musicians and equally impressive production values. Among the first dozen releases on Ken Music (hey—why not?) is ***In Process,*** a sextet date from Brian Lynch, the last trumpeter to work with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. On this wholly satisfying date, Lynch's bold and sinuous lines dovetail with the surging alto of Jim Snidero and pianist Benny Green's iron lace. Pianist Ted Rosenthal scores a knockout debut with ***New Tunes, New Traditions,*** highlighted by subtle versions of several Thelonious Monk tunes. And another pianist, Salvatore Bonafede, has already set critics and fellow musicians buzzing with ***Actor/Actress,*** an unexpected potpourri of personalized compositions played by a perfect quartet starring tenor saxist Joe Lovano.

Lovano, in fact, has entered into a tie with Kenny Barron for the title of this year's most valuable player, making equally invaluable contributions to albums by Tom Harrell and Paul Motian; and on guitarist John Scofield's terrific ***Meant to Be*** (Blue Note), he all but steals the show in a program that ranges from modern roadhouse tunes to entrancing dirges. Lovano has a burry, textured sound that shames the metallic one-dimensionality now in fashion, and his solos are tough and enveloping; his ***Landmarks*** (also on Blue Note) sports a variety of meaty tunes and makes him the leading tenor man of the Nineties. Meanwhile, the other M.V.P. contender, pianist Barron, has no fewer than three excellent but quite different releases: ***Invitation*** (a quartet date on the Dutch label Criss Cross); ***Quickstep*** (a more adventurous quintet album on Enja); and ***Live at Maybeck Recital Hall Volume Ten*** (Concord), a grand-piano recital. In addition, he anchored the rhythm section on albums by two quite different tenor saxists: Eddie Harris, whose ***There Was a Time: Echo of Harlem*** (Enja) celebrates his funky intellectualism; and the late Stan Getz, whose ***Serenity*** (EmArcy) gorgeously cements his memory.

Finally, the short list of sure bets: the two reissued volumes of ***Brazilliance*** (Pacific Jazz), by guitarist Laurindo Almeida and saxist Bud Shank, trombonist Robin Eubanks' ***Karma*** (JMT) and Keith Jarrett's ***Tribute*** (ECM).

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# MUSIC

### DAVE MARSH

IN EVERY ART FORM except pop music, it's understood that artists benefit from maturity and experience. But rock and soul artists are expected to burn out within a few years. And they almost always do.

The problem is that few pop musicians have the luxury of making the records they want to make. Even the biggest are threatened with being unceremoniously discarded—by their record label or by their fans—if they fail to hit the charts. But the rise of musical-niche marketing changes that: Unruly talents such as Van Morrison can make an album every year or so. So what if he'll never be top ten again, or if his marketing niche is New Age?

Van's latest, ***Hymns to the Silence*** (Polydor/PLG), is a sprawling double album that typifies his recent music: A blend of Irish airs, Anglo-American folk melodies, reminiscences of rock-and-roll radio days, country and Gospel standards creates a jazzy, quasi-mystical mood both seductive and less than coherent. It's ambitious background music, easy listening that bristles with unlikely seductions: the sardonic narrative of *Village Idiot*, the anger of *Professional Jealousy*, the melody of *I Can't Stop Loving You*, the grumbling nostalgia of *Take Me Back*.

Deciphering this stuff is fun. Since Van's nothing if not obsessive, there are plenty of moments that will invoke comparisons to earlier Morrison records—if you're a fan. If you're not a fan—if you don't think of Van as the rock generation's Mose Allison—it must be maddening. The best comparison is to Woody Allen, another ultrapersonal stylist who successfully defies his industry's conventions. Is that a compliment? Well, 26 years after I first heard Morrison sing *Gloria*, he still has my attention. Much as I love *Sweet Child o' Mine*, I do not expect as much from Axl Rose.

### VIC GARBARINI

Mary's Danish, an eclectic blend of punk, funk, country and pop, is being hailed as the hottest alternative band to come out of L.A. in years. Does its first major-label release, ***Circa*** (Morgan Creek), live up to the hype? Yes and no. Vocalists Julie Ritter and Gretchen Seager's reedy harmonies are backed by Louis Guiterrez' squalling Jimi-by-way-of-Slash guitar pyrotechnics and a firm but funky rhythm section. Together, they attempt to fashion a new hybrid from classic pop sources. Imagine the B-52's crossed with X and the Chili Peppers. Then throw in some Maria McKee country twang and you have *Yellow Creep Around*, *Hoof* and *Deadly Sins*. But the hype definitely turns to *hubris* when they try too hard to be artsy and wind up coming across as overreaching and adolescent. The vocals are occasionally affected, verging on sophomoric at times. Mary's Danish is clearly at its best when cutting the camp and playing it straight. *Circa* is a semi-auspicious debut that hits more than it misses. But, like most Danish, it could use less sugar.

Van's *Hymns to the Silence*.

A sprawling double album, the world's longest EP, this year's impressive debut.

### ROBERT CHRISTGAU

Do the La's claim to sound like some earlier Liverpudlian guitar quartet? Get real—who would buy that line? Instead, they claim to hate their debut album, which was years in the making, due largely to their bad manners in the studio. And although I believe them, I'm obviously a patsy, because I also believe ***The La's*** (London) sounds like you know who. The wry grit of lead La Lee Mavers' beats is sparer than that other group's cutting harmonies. But sole songwriter Mavers has the rare gift for the catchy-yet-not-cloyingly cheerful tune without which any good ol' pop homage is nothing but hope and hype.

The KLF, two lapsed London art students (who have also recorded as the Timelords and the Justified Ancients of Mu Mu, a.k.a. the JAMs), exploit a different set of anti-establishment poses. One of the first dance-music production teams to sense the limitless possibilities of sampling, KLF had a record taken off the market after it was sued by Abba, and has since evolved into a creative mode less likely to attract the attention of copyright lawyers. Its first U.S. major-label release, ***The White Room*** (Arista), is nothing more nor less than a canny electro-house album juiced with jarring jolts of beat and electronic noise. In theory, I liked this group better when it was subverting Whitney Houston. But anybody with the slightest tolerance for Eurodisco might as well start here.

### CHARLES M. YOUNG

A collection of B sides and material from the vault, ***Attack of the Killer B's*** (Megaforce/Island) by Anthrax is not, the

## GUEST SHOT

*Guitarist/songwriter/singer* ***Richie Sambora*** *already claims fame via his tenure in the band Bon Jovi—and his relationship with Cher. Currently, however, Sambora's pride and joy is his rock/R&B debut solo LP, "Stranger in This Town." Among other highlights, there is a cut featuring Eric Clapton. And alongside Slowhand in Sambora's hall of personal passions stands the band Skid Row. Sambora rates its second album, "Slave to the Grind."*

"Skid Row's most honest emotions absolutely rule the album—and that kind of artistic nerve is rare. Stylistically, *Slave* is a singular hybrid of punk and metal, with ace musicianship from start to finish. Catch *In a Darkened Room*, which makes child abuse vivid through fearless lyrical content. For contrast, move on to *Mudkicker*, an effective 'Fuck you' to the music business. *Riot Act* stands out, too. The over-all production is very raw and live, so all that aggression and bravery get right up into your face. Even if punk and metal annoy you, listen to *Slave* because the guys in Skid Row have stunning talent and the balls to tell the emotional truth about themselves and their lives."

band insists, a new album. Rather, it is the "longest EP ever," and since it clocks in at nearly 45 minutes of music, who can disagree? Anthrax is tribal and righteous, sometimes self-righteous, and doesn't disguise its message with artful indirection. Band members thrash as hard as they can and scream their truth as loud as they can. The problem with dropping all artful indirection—and all melody—is that it becomes obvious. I happen to agree with a lot of the stuff Anthrax propounds, so I feel I should like this record more than I do.

Fish Karma intermittently suffers from obviousness on ***teddy in the sky with magnets*** (Triple X). Anyone who ridicules working-class culture by mentioning K mart, as in *Swap Meet Women*, can make no claim to unadulterated originality. I nonetheless like his song titles (e.g., *Baby, Let's Be Methodists*) and his free association: "Love is like a large piece of cheesecloth attached to a revolving bowling ball covered with fructose and postage stamps."

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**NELSON GEORGE**

Looking for Nineties trends? Here's one: So far, much of the decade's most successfully visionary music has emanated from England in the form of bands and singers who blend traditional pop styles (rock, R&B) with new ones (hip-hop, house). We're not talking about a rapper talking over an R&B track, which is so typical now, but a more subtle mating of rhythms and harmonies.

One of the promising recordings in this style is made by Seal (a.k.a. Sealhenry Samuel), a 27-year-old black Briton of Nigerian and Brazilian descent. All nine songs on **Seal** (Sire), produced by British superproducer Trevor Horn, are smart, memorable concoctions. The first single, *Crazy*, has an ominous keyboard arrangement spiked by an intense drum break. *Whirlpool* is a sweetly melodic ballad performed primarily over acoustic guitar that's reminiscent of Led Zeppelin at its most thoughtful. With its percussive guitar lines and dynamic changes, *Future Love Paradise* recalls vintage Traffic and Norman Whitfield's Temptations productions of the late Seventies. *Wild* is a vibrant, hooky pop song flavored with Joni Mitchell illusions and funk.

Seal, possessor of a strong, throaty low-tenor voice, is an expressive singer who understands how to record his voice so that its raw edges are preserved. Unlike Terence Trent D'Arby and Lenny Kravitz, black artists who are equally eclectic in their musical choices, Seal pulls off his aural collage with a freshness and an individuality that demand respect. Without a doubt, this is one of the year's most impressive debuts.

# FAST TRACKS

## ROCKMETER

| | Christgau | Garbarini | George | Marsh | Young |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Anthrax** *Attack of the Killer B's* | 4 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 6 |
| ***The La's*** | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 8 |
| **Mary's Danish** *Circa* | 3 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 7 |
| ***Seal*** | 5 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 8 |
| **Van Morrison** *Hymns to the Silence* | 8 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 7 |

**BEST PR RELEASE OF THE MONTH DEPARTMENT:** The National Association of Brick Distributors is promoting its second annual Brick Video Awards. Wipe the disbelief off your face right now. The association has nominated 29 artists in ten categories, judging the videos by, among other things, the amount of brick construction shown in them. Here are a couple of categories: Best Alternative Rock Brick Video and Best Video Using Brick to Achieve a Single Purpose. Not to mention Best New Artist in a Brick Video. The night wouldn't be complete without inducting **Iggy Pop** into the Brick Hall of Fame. For his LP *Brick by Brick*, of course.

**REELING AND ROCKING:** **Bon Jovi** keyboardist **David Bryan** is scoring the movie *Netherworld*. **Edgar Winter** is also writing songs for the film. . . . **Suzanne Vega** is composing the score for a cable-TV movie of a **Carson McCullers** short story, *A Domestic Dilemma*, starring **Ray Liotta** and **Andie MacDowell.** . . . The **Rolling Stones** concert movie *Steel Wheels* had a film-festival premiere in Toronto and should be coming to a theater near you.

**NEWSBREAKS:** **Prince** has been asked to compose a score for the **Joffrey Ballet.** . . . **Annie Leibovitz,** who went from taking great photos of rock-and-rollers to taking great photos of everyone, is currently the subject of a touring retrospective. For a look at her portraits of popular icons, check your local museum schedule. . . . If you're going to be in L.A. this fall, you'll want to head over to the Greek Theater to hear a night of music called Jazz to End Hunger. Artists such as **Della Reese, Maynard Ferguson, Ahmad Jamal, George Duke** and **Tom Scott** will be making sweet noise to benefit a number of national organizations assisting the hungry and the homeless. . . . **Smokey Robinson** has composed music and lyrics for a Broadway musical called *Hoops*, about the life of the creator of the **Harlem Globetrotters.** . . . Another bio headed for Broadway is *Love, Janis*, about the life of **Janis Joplin.** . . . Coming on the In Your Ear label, CDs and cassettes of *National Lampoon* radio shows from the Seventies. Listen for the first two with **John Belushi, Gilda Radner, Bill Murray, Billy Crystal, Chevy Chase** and **Christopher Guest.** . . . The tours that survived one of the worst summers in history, financially speaking, were those that kept ticket prices low, such as **Damn Yankees/Bad Company,** and such groups as the **Dead,** who have a built-in audience. Megatours with **David Lee Roth** and **Guns n' Roses** foundered. . . . **Doc Pomus'** son, **Geoffrey Felder,** is organizing a series of concerts at the Lone Star Cafe in New York. Once a month, the likes of **Dr. John, Ben E. King, Billy Vera** and **Southside Johnny** will do shows to raise money for the Doc Pomus Fund of the Rhythm and Blues Foundation. The fund helps struggling singer/songwriters pay rent and medical expenses. . . . You say you don't have enough rock-and-roll memorabilia? Or you need the perfect gift for your middle-aged hippie aunt? How about a **Beatles** plate in fine china? The Bradford Exchange is taking orders for an eight-and-a-half-inch plate banded in 22-kt. gold. For more information, call 800-323-5577. For $24.75, you can eat off it. What can you eat? If you were at Christie's auction in London last summer, you could have bid (yes, for cash) on a piece of toast **George Harrison** was served for breakfast August 2, 1963. Hold the marmalade!

—BARBARA NELLIS

# MOVIES

## By BRUCE WILLIAMSON

IT'S DOUBTFUL that any American director other than Terry Gilliam would even attempt a movie as far out and phantasmagorical as ***The Fisher King*** (Tri-Star). Richard LaGravenese's multilayered first screenplay has fallen into the right hands—with Gilliam directing Jeff Bridges, Robin Williams, Mercedes Ruehl and Amanda Plummer in a dense, astonishing comedy about love, loss and redemption. Dynamic in the richest movie role he has ever had, Bridges plays Jack, a cruel New York deejay whose radio talk show is renowned for insults and shock value. After driving one unstable listener to commit mass murder and suicide, he abruptly falls from grace. A year or so later, he's drinking himself to death and working in a video store with a woman who loves him (Ruehl). By chance, Jack encounters a homeless dreamer named Parry (Williams), who is searching for the Holy Grail and believes he has located it in a rich man's palatial mansion. Parry's other romantic fixation turns out to be a plain girl named Lydia (Plummer).

How the lives of Jack, Parry and the women they love are intricately interwoven keeps *Fisher King* soaring through one surreal scene after another. The movie boasts visions of a medieval Red Knight whose head shoots flame, riverfront thugs who like setting people afire, plus some free-form riffs of human comedy by all hands. Bridges and Williams are at least matched by Ruehl, in a classic portrait of a woman fighting to keep her man without losing her identity. There's also a delicious bit by Michael Jeter as a gay, balding hoofer sent to woo the shy Lydia with a mad musical impersonation of Ethel Merman in *Gypsy*. Like *Brazil* and previous Gilliam works, *Fisher King* bypasses easy formula moviemaking to score as a bold, unique and exhilarating cinematic trip. ¥¥¥¥

•

Three modern New York couples still struggling to get the hang of the mating game hold center stage in ***Married to It*** (Orion). The youngest pair are played by Mary Stuart Masterson and Robert Sean Leonard, whose wholesome appeal serves to remind us that "Yuppies are people, too." She's a high school psychologist, he's on Wall Street and wrongly accused of financial chicanery. Through a school P.T.A. project, they become chummy with Stockard Channing and Beau Bridges, playing a couple of socially aware Sixties types with two kids and smoky memories of Woodstock. The third pair consists of Cybill Shepherd, a

*Fisher King:* This Robin's no hood.

*Fisher King:* exhilarating;
*Married to It:* charming;
Lily Tomlin: magnificent.

Big Business sexpot, and her husband the toy manufacturer (Ron Silver), whose sulky young daughter (Donna Vivino) makes Stepmom's life difficult. Under director Arthur Hiller, working with Janet Kovalcik's loosely organized but lively screenplay, the women in the cast appear to be the great equalizers. There's a bit too much stress on soapy sentimentality but plenty of counterbalancing cleverness and compassion. Channing is a mesmerizing performer, and Shepherd throws away zingy one-liners, as when she looks back with mixed emotion at the sexual mores of yesteryear: "Then it was easier to fuck somebody than to explain why you don't feel like it." Overall, *Married to It* has charm, wry humor and first-class acting. ¥¥¥

•

The white-hot intensity of Mimi Rogers' performance makes ***The Rapture*** (Fine Line) fascinating even when it comes dangerously close to becoming a piece of pure fundamentalist claptrap. Writer-director Michael Tolkin casts Rogers as Sharon, a terminally bored telephone operator who swings with strangers she picks up in bars. One night, she meets a guy aptly named Randy (David Duchovny), loves and loses him, has a child and discovers God. In fact, Sharon finally gets religion in such a heady dose that she becomes a mad fanatic who kills her little girl as a human sacrifice and winds up behind bars. She also winds up escaping, possibly through divine intervention, and stands on a hilltop awaiting . . . well, either the paddy wagon or the apocalypse. Spiritual soul searchers are apt to see this as a movie well worth talking about; others will see it at their own risk. ¥¥½

•

Almost simultaneously leaping in and out of character as Lyn, Edie and Marge—three young women whose friendship survives the feminist revolution for a couple of decades—Lily Tomlin is magnificent. "If I had known this was what it would be like to have it all," she muses as a harried Yuppie matron, "I might have been willing to settle for less." Also among the dozen people portrayed in the film version of her one-woman show, ***The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe*** (Orion Classics), are a bag lady named Trudy and a teenaged punk called Agnus Angst. Performed on screen with more costumes and scenery than she ever needed on stage, Tomlin's *Search* (directed by John Bailey from Jane Wagner's eloquent screenplay) is hilarious, perceptive and at its vibrant best when Lily just wings it without props or visual aids. ¥¥¥¥

•

Sean Penn, making his debut as a writer and director with ***The Indian Runner*** (MGM/Pathe), has already expressed his intention to give up his acting career (see this month's *Playboy Interview*). On the evidence here, Penn's strongest point as a film maker is his ability to showcase the exceptional power and presence of his cast—especially that of David Morse (a TV recruit best known for *St. Elsewhere*) and Viggo Mortensen, a less familiar face who could become an overnight sensation in the bad-boy tradition of Marlon Brando. The two play brothers; Morse is Joe, a highway patrolman in a small American town, Mortensen his wastrel sibling, Frank. Penn clearly identifies with the tempestuous, short-tempered brawler, Frank, and Mortensen more than lives up to his expectations. Valeria Golino and Patricia Arquette register strongly, too, as the women in their lives. Charles Bronson plays the boys' suicidal dad, with Dennis Hopper as a brutish bartender. Where the movie fails is in its self-conscious stylization—a common error by fledgling directors—and in Penn's screenplay, which has too much narration. Although often pretentious, *Indian Runner* still racks up some bull's-eyes as the work of a gifted, ambitious young man with a lot on his mind and a lot to learn. ¥¥½

•

The lady of the house (Diane Ladd), whose Southern family takes in a fairly promiscuous maid in ***Rambling Rose*** (Seven Arts) circa 1935, holds a tolerant view

**Fortunately, every day comes with an evening.**

of the simple country girl under their roof. "It's not sex that she wants, it's *love*," drawls milady. And, of course, she's right. Touchingly played by Laura Dern (Ladd's real daughter, in fact), Rose is a girl of easy virtue who offers herself to the family's aloof daddy (Robert Duvall), lets 13-year-old Buddy (Lukas Haas) launch his sex education by exploring her body in bed and inflames some village louts to start scrapping over her on the front lawn. Adapted by Calder Willingham from his autobiographical novel, *Rose* is introduced by John Heard, as the adult Buddy, in a long nostalgic flashback. Director Martha Coolidge gives the movie an old-fashioned air of genteel decadence that's erotic and mellow, as well as hard to resist. ¥¥¥

•

The seemingly random murder of an old Jewish woman who operates a hock shop triggers the action of **Homicide** (Triumph). Joe Mantegna is low-key but utterly commanding as Bobby Gold, a New York police officer who is hardly aware of his own ethnic roots as a Jew until the clues in the case lead him into a net of neo-Nazi anti-Semites. He also locates a secret Israeli organization that needs his help. Gold ultimately comes face to face with his own prejudices when his partner (William H. Macy) is shot by a black fugitive during an unrelated drug bust. Writer-director David Mamet has made *Homicide* an intellectual thriller full of dark thoughts about the nature of evil. The movie's explosive wit and violence are totally controlled substances—with nothing wasted or gratuitous, either in the tight Mamet screenplay or in Mantegna's cool work as a man on the brink of a psychological crisis. ¥¥¥½

•

Two teenaged sisters fall in love with the same lad in director Robert Mulligan's **The Man in the Moon** (MGM/Pathe), a sensitive family drama written by Jenny Wingfield. Young Reese Witherspoon plays the 14-year-old tomboy who becomes pals with a neighboring farm boy named Court (Jason London) and sneaks off to go swimming with him. She's on cloud nine until Court meets her 17-year-old sister Maureen (Emily Warfield). Before the sibling rivalry gets out of hand, tragedy strikes. Sam Waterston and Tess Harper play the girls' parents, as wholesome as the mom and dad in a Disney movie. *Man in the Moon* is poignant and appealing, handled with care by Mulligan, who got a 1962 Oscar nomination for his direction of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. ¥¥½

•

London-born Patsy Kensit (who was Mel Gibson's love interest in *Lethal Weapon 2*) exudes charisma in **Twenty-One** (Triton) as an English bird on the loose in Manhattan, London and Venice. She is Katie, who works her wiles on a number of male pursuers—most of them married, drugged or otherwise engaged. She also has to address the movie camera directly in a recurrent monolog that is no help at all. However, Kensit's plucky screen presence gives *Twenty-One* a lift even as the odds mount against it. ¥¥

Hart (left), Thing (on Julia).

## OFF CAMERA

You won't be seeing *all* of magician **Christopher Hart,** 30, in the upcoming film version of *The Addams Family*: just five fingers' worth. Hart actually plays a character called Thing, a disembodied hand. "It's not scary," he notes, "but lovable. Thing plays practical jokes, more like a family pet." Preparing for his scenes—most of them opposite Raul Julia, as Gomez—Hart had his hand in make-up for roughly 45 minutes a day. When the cameras started rolling, "they'd shoot me running across the floor, then erase my body from the film frame by frame, leaving nothing visible but the hand. It's ninety percent special effects."

How does one get such a job? Being a performing magician helps. Hart began studying magic when he was nine and appears regularly at The Magic Castle, a private L.A. club for magicians. He has also strutted his stuff from Atlantic City to Vegas to Osaka. At his audition for the Thing gig, film makers asked Hart to make his hand express various emotions: looking happy, sad, angry, tired, drowsy. "I learned you can portray a lot with your hands. I'd let my fingers do the walking or start jumping around."

Hart sees *The Addams Family* as the start of something big. "It may be fantasy, but I dream about the possibility of a TV series. Thing is the *hero* of this movie. I can see him on TV, getting clues, solving crimes. With *camera* magic, I've learned you can do anything you want."

## MOVIE SCORE CARD

*capsule close-ups of current films*
*by bruce williamson*

**Barton Fink** (Reviewed 10/91) Vintage Hollywood, a house of horrors. ¥¥¥½

**Brenda Starr** (10/91) As the comic-strip reporter: Brooke Shields. ¥¥

**City of Hope** (10/91) John Sayles's essay on big-town corruption. ¥¥

**The Commitments** (9/91) Raising the roof with a Dublin rock group. ¥¥¥¥

**Dead Again** (10/91) In an L.A. suspense drama, Kenneth Branagh and top actors enjoy a field day. ¥¥¥

**The Doctor** (Listed only) Superior soap, with William Hurt as an ailing medic tasting his own medicine. ¥¥¥

**The Fisher King** (See review) Here, Manhattan is Gilliam's island. ¥¥¥¥

**Homicide** (See review) Mantegna on fire as New York's finest. ¥¥¥½

**Hot Shots!** (Listed only) Delightfully dizzy spoof of *Top Gun* and other hit movies, with Charlie Sheen. ¥¥¥

**The Indian Runner** (See review) Sean Penn runs the show this time. ¥¥½

**The Man in the Moon** (See review) Sisters with boy trouble. ¥¥½

**Married to It** (See review) Three couples working things out. ¥¥¥

**The Miracle** (9/91) Beverly D'Angelo as a worldly woman with a secret. ¥¥

**Naked Tango** (10/91) Beautiful but dumb drama has Mathilda May trapped in a Buenos Aires bordello. ¥¥

**Prisoners of the Sun** (7/91) War crimes charged by Bryan Brown. ¥¥¥

**Rambling Rose** (See review) Laura Dern spreads love all around. ¥¥¥

**The Rapture** (See review) Sex drive derailed into religious zeal. ¥¥½

**The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe** (See review) Lily Tomlin as lots of people. ¥¥¥¥

**Sex, Drugs, Rock and Roll** (9/91) Bogosian's one-man show. ¥¥¥¥

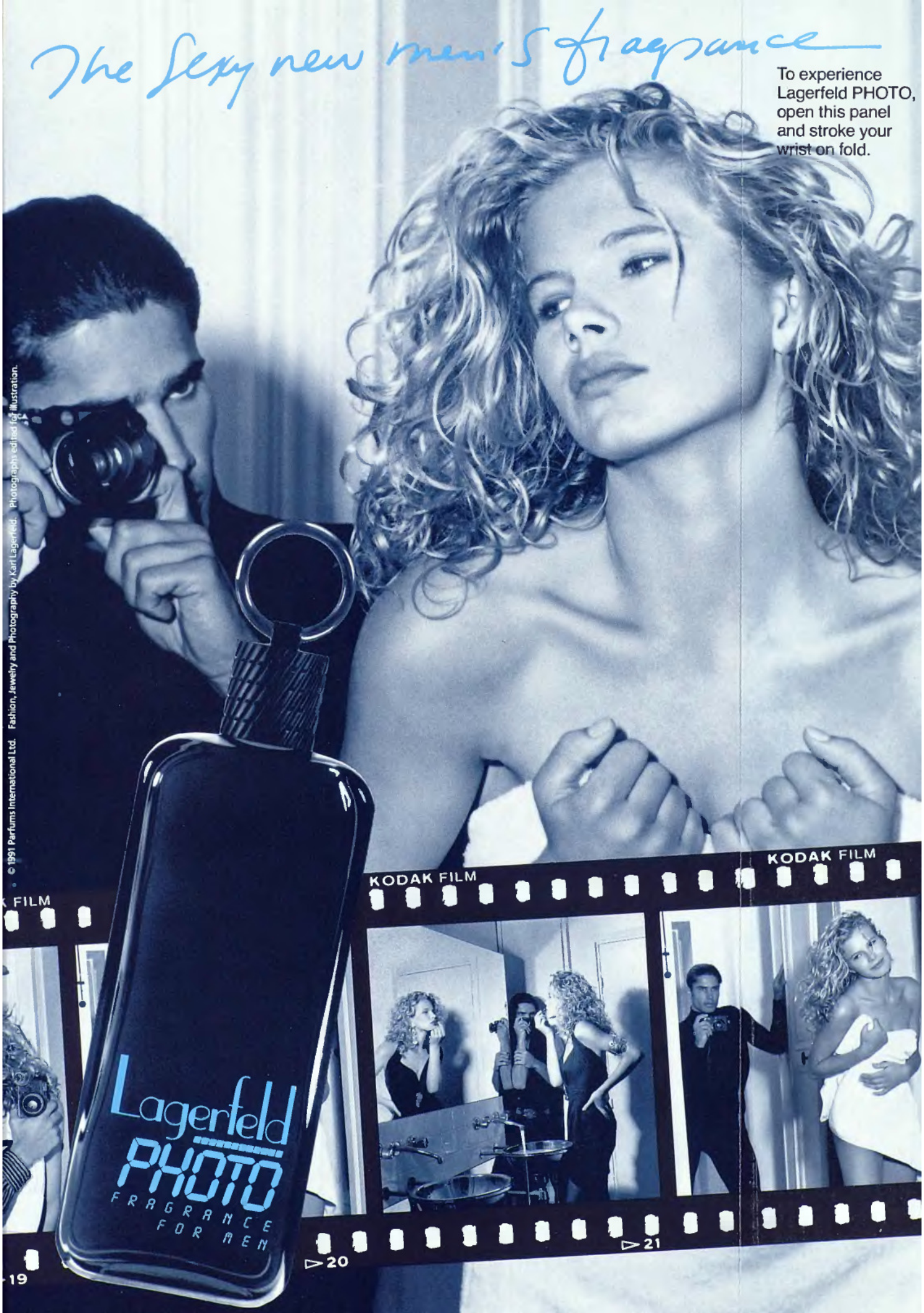
**Terminator 2: Judgment Day** (10/91) Arnold's back, on a hell-to-pay mission to save the world. ¥¥¥

**Twenty-One** (See review) Coming of age, sort of, with Patsy Kensit. ¥¥

**Undertow** (10/91) The entrapment of a political closet queen. ¥¥

**Whore** (10/91) Theresa Russell as a streetwalker who shows little but tells all. ¥½

¥¥¥¥ Don't miss ¥¥ Worth a look
¥¥¥ Good show ¥ Forget it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# VIDEO

## BRUCE ON VIDEO
### our movie critic goes to the tape

With baseball's World Series upon us, it's time to pitch some diamond epics worthy of instant replay. Wind up with:

***The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars & Motor Kings:*** With Richard Pryor, James Earl Jones and other heavy hitters, Billy Dee Williams stars in a rollicking comedy about blacks playing ball when racism ruled the sport.

***Damn Yankees:*** Bob Fosse choreographed this bouncy version of the Broadway musical, with Gwen Verdon helping the Devil transform an average guy (Tab Hunter) into a baseball whiz.

***The Jackie Robinson Story:*** Jackie as himself in a stirring dramatization of his historic career as the first big-leaguer to break the color barrier.

***Major League:*** Silly but amusing spoof—low and inside—about a winning team of losers on a Cleveland club. Line-up includes Tom Berenger and Charlie Sheen, with Corbin Bernsen on deck.

***The Pride of the Yankees:*** Gary Cooper is grand as Lou Gehrig in a 1942 heartbreaker about the baseball great who had a disease named after him. A slew of Oscar nominations, all deserved.

Other VCR M.V.Ps: ***Bang the Drum Slowly, Bull Durham, Eight Men Out, Field of Dreams, The Natural.*** —BRUCE WILLIAMSON

## MUSEUM QUALITY

What do dinosaurs, Archie Bunker's chair and the Hope diamond have in common? They're just three of the 100,000,000 treasures housed in Washington's Smithsonian Institution now featured in seven collectible videos. Among them:

***Creatures Great and Small:*** Narrators James Earl Jones and James Whitmore journey to a world inhabited by dinosaurs—with their fearsome arsenal of spikes, plates and armor—and to a tropical rain forest for a close-up look at bugs.

***The Flying Machines:*** Soar back in time with authentic footage of a World War Two battle, Thirties barnstormers and turn-of-the-century aeronauts in their magnificent gravity-defying machines.

***Gems and Minerals:*** The ultimate rock video features a 4.6-billion-year-old meteorite, the legendary 45.5-carat Hope diamond and a peek into the museum's off-limits Blue Room and vault. Keep your hands to yourselves.

***Our Biosphere:*** Actor and environmentalist Robert Redford gives us the dirt on how the Biosphere II project—an ecological Noah's Ark of the 20th Century—can save our planet.

Other tapes in the series include a Dudley Moore–narrated tour, peeks into the closets of our First Ladies (the highlight is Nancy singing *Secondhand Clothes*) and a visit to the National Zoo.

*Available from Public Media Video, 800-262-8600; on disc from Luminvision, 800-776-LUMI.* —HELEN FRANGOULIS

## VIDEOSYNCRASIES

***Italianamerican and The Big Shave:*** A pair of early featurettes from master film maker Martin Scorsese—the former, an intimate chat with his folks; the latter, a black comedy about how a man's morning ablutions turn into a blood bath (Home Vision Cinema).

***The Making of "Miss Saigon":*** Step-by-step docuvid tracing the evolution of the Broadway megasmash, from the designing of its logo to opening night in London. Vid curiously side-steps the protests the musical met along the way, but that's showbiz (HBO).

## THE HARDWARE CORNER

**Wet 'n' Wild:** Wanna take your camcorder on your next skin-diving jaunt? No problem. Panasonic now has an underwater housing for its VHS-C Palmcorder line. You'll be watertight to 50 meters. $499. —MAURY LEVY

## VIDBITS

Talk about your odd couples: Kit Parker Video has announced this double release: ***Sex and Buttered Popcorn,*** a look back at naughty classics of yesteryear; and ***December 7th: The Movie,*** the suppressed full-length version of John Ford's documentary about Pearl Harbor. . . . Remember the 1989 miniseries ***Lonesome Dove***—the Emmy-grabbing, star-studded homage to the cattle drive? Cabin Fever has put all six and a half hours on tape. Now all you need is a little spare time.

## GUEST SHOT

"I love action films," says actor, director and former commander of the U.S.S. Enterprise **William Shatner,** "because I love to *direct* action." And video is the perfect medium for the star, who likes to "roll the tape back and forth" to study the techniques of Francis Ford Coppola, Ridley Scott, David Lean and Martin Scorsese ("*His* work is the perfect amalgam of action, visualization and drama"). Shatner also lends his talents to special vid projects such as *Ultimata Survivors*, a look at how four real-life cops overcame major crises. And then there's *Star Trek*, which wrapped its final movie chapter last summer. "It's the last one and I'm really very sad," admits Shatner—but apparently not sad enough to watch the legendary space show on TV ("I flick past it"). And what about that gift the studio once sent him—the complete 79-tape *Star Trek* collection? "They're still in their wrappers." Oops. —DOROTHY B. ATCHESON

## VIDEO MOOD METER

| MOOD | MOVIE |
|---|---|
| FEELING WESTERN | ***Dances with Wolves*** (Kevin Costner, Oscar's darling, goes native with this stunning hamage to Plains virtue); ***Son of the Morning Star*** (Gary Cole as Custer confronts his "Indian thing" at Little Big Horn; solid history made for TV); ***The Shadow Riders*** (Civil War vets Tom Selleck and Sam Elliot save Sam's gal from a Mexican brothel). |
| FEELING WEIRD | ***Twin Peaks*** (European version of series' premiere; includes Lynch's whadunit ending); ***Nothing but Trouble*** (*Beetlejuice* meets *Rocky Horror* in Dan Aykroyd's odd directing debut); ***Spitting Image*** (the famous ugly British puppets take an fave targets—among them, Reagan and Thatcher—in two tapes). |
| FEELING HARMONIC | ***The Five Heartbeats*** (Robert Townsend fronts a Motown-inspired quintet; OK saga with sa-sa soul); ***The All-Star Reggae Session*** (infectious greatest-hits stuff with Jimmy Cliff and Ziggy Marley); ***Zydeco Nite 'N' Day*** (vid docu-primer explores the joyful noise of bayou funk; stars galore). |
| FEELING INTENSE | ***La Femme Nikita*** (French pals mold a miniskirted junkie into an assassin—*ahh, Paris*); ***Closet Land*** (mysterious guy kidnaps kids'-books author, toys with her mind and body); ***Queens Logic*** (borough boomers gather for wedding and get serious; stars *thirtysomething*'s Ken Olin). |

# BOOKS

## By DIGBY DIEHL

NORMAN MAILER is an exasperating genius. His huge (1307 pages) new novel, ***Harlot's Ghost*** (Random House), demonstrates in many passages that he is still a dazzling prose stylist. It also offers us plenty of his quirky imaginative intelligence as he surveys the American political landscape. This is the Mailer we admire. His gift for describing powerful dramatic moments and for providing unorthodox philosophical insights has not deserted him. Unfortunately, neither have his obsessions.

Mailer indulges his fantasies about the death of Marilyn Monroe, the affairs of Judith Campbell Exner, the Bay of Pigs invasion, plots to assassinate Fidel Castro and the undermining influence of the CIA in American life. There is an all-too-familiar manly swagger to the dialog as several of his characters revel in the details of their prodigious sex lives (and provide investigations into aberrant homosexual and transvestite behavior). Longtime Mailer readers will see him in some of these passages as veering dangerously close to self-parody.

*Harlot's Ghost*, at one level, is an extended commentary on significant events in American history from 1955 to 1963, as seen through the eyes of a young CIA man named Harry Hubbard. His father is a career Company operative, and Hubbard is recruited right out of St. Matthew's and guided through Yale by Hugh Montague (code name: Harlot), a character based on the legendary CIA Chief of Counterintelligence James Jesus Angleton.

Plot summary rarely does justice to any saga as sweeping as this one. The heart of *Harlot's Ghost* is the complex and evolving relationships among a few central characters. The bulk of the story is told in long, intimate (in terms both of romantic overtones and of espionage) letters between Hubbard and Harlot's wife, Kittredge (a couple, we are told, who will later cuckold Harlot and then marry). Frequently, the story is focused on a fumbling search for the elusive truth amid contradictory and unreliable reports from people who must trust one another for information. (The CIA: Mailer's metaphor for contemporary life?)

"I didn't know the beginning of what I was doing, nor would I now know the end," admits Hubbard. Mailer apparently finds these games of truth and illusion so compelling that he sees no need to give the reader a satisfying answer to most of these spy puzzles or even a conclusion to some plot episodes. Most frustrating of all is that he wraps this story within a story by telling us at the outset that Hubbard is rereading a 2000-page manuscript—the story of his life in the CIA—that he has smuggled into Moscow on microfilm. So, 1307 pages later, what's the payoff? There is none, only advertisements for himself. *Harlot's Ghost* is a disappointment, an opportunity squandered.

*Harlot's Ghost:* A Mailer fantasy.

Mailer defies storytelling conventions; Breslin brings Damon Runyon to life.

Happily, Mailer's former political running mate, Jimmy Breslin, has written the best book of his life in the biography of ***Damon Runyon*** (Ticknor & Fields). Runyon, best known for *Guys and Dolls*, the musical based on his short stories, was a career New York journalist and columnist who from the Teens to the Forties immortalized the colorful characters hanging out on Broadway. Breslin, a columnist for *Newsday* who has been praised as a latter-day Runyon, tells the story of the earlier writer's life with his best *Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight* prose. This is an original biography with so much empathy, insight, heart and humor that you will savor every page. Runyon woulda loved it.

Frederick Forsyth's latest book, ***The Deceiver*** (Bantam), is really four novellas cleverly woven into a novel: a review of the outstanding cases handled by Sam McCready, a British Intelligence operative fighting retirement. Since *The Day of the Jackal*, Forsyth has demonstrated his talent for the tension and tight plotting of spy thrillers. This book, which shifts from East Berlin to Libya to the Caribbean, will enhance his reputation, and McCready will take his place alongside George Smiley in the pantheon of espionage.

Finally, a tough and eloquent collection of war memoirs by Philip Caputo focuses on battle fronts in Saigon, Afghanistan and the Middle East. ***Means of Escape*** (Harper-Collins) is Caputo's follow-up to his classic report from Vietnam, *A Rumor of War*, and his description of the "suicide" of Lebanon is as chilling and riveting as any war reportage we've read anywhere.

### BOOK BAG

***Three Blind Mice*** (Random House), by Ken Auletta: The intriguing blow-by-blow story of how managerial incompetence inside ABC, CBS and NBC led network TV into doing a Detroit.

***You Gotta Play Hurt*** (Simon & Schuster), by Dan Jenkins: Another hilarious fictional romp through the sports world, this time seen through the eyes of a randy sports columnist.

***Simon and Garfunkel*** (Birch Lane), by Joseph Morella and Patricia Barey: The events that shaped the lives, the art and the love-hate relationship of the duo who were the voice of a generation.

***The New Comics Anthology*** (Collier), edited by Bob Callahan: Explore the borderless badlands with America's best postmodern cartoonists.

***Pilots*** (Simon & Schuster), by William Neely: Those magnificent men—and women—in their flying machines describe the timeless thrill of flight.

***Camels Are Easy, Comedy's Hard*** (Villard), by Roy Blount Jr.: Humorist *extraordinaire* Blount incorporates a nose-eating hyena, a man-wrestling deer and his celebrated crossword puzzle into this witty 64-story collection.

***Brotherly Love*** (Random House), by Pete Dexter: The award-winning author of *Paris Trout* tells the violent story of two boys born into a Mob family and how they grow up on the mean streets of Philadelphia learning the "business."

***Erotica*** (Fawcett Columbine), edited by Margaret Reynolds: A provocative anthology of prose, poetry, songs and journals that challenge the conventional definition of erotica. Among the all-female cast of contributors: Anaïs Nin, George Sand, Margaret Atwood.

***The Last Days of John Lennon*** (Birch Lane), by Frederic Seaman: A personal memoir from Lennon's aide-de-camp, who paints a portrait of a tormented man. Yoko would like to see this one disappear.

***The Walls Around Us*** (Villard), by David Owen: What Tracy Kidder's *House* did for home building, *Walls* does for remodeling and repairs. A witty guide to that intimidating jumble of wires, boards and plaster we like to call home.

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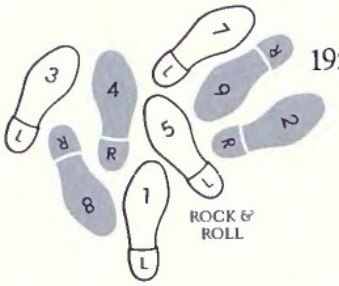


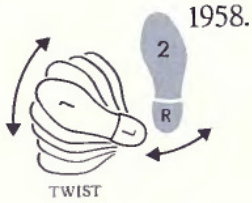


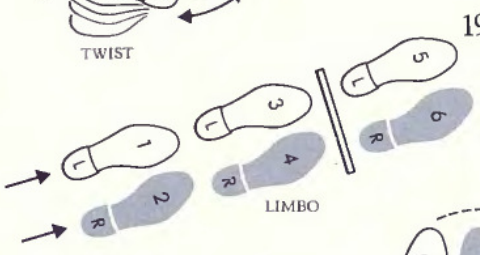

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**Quincy Jones: Back On The Block** (Warner Bros.) 84116

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**The Judds: Love Can Build A Bridge** (RCA) 24549

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**R.E.M.: Eponymous** (I.R.S.) 00701

**Very Best Of Cream: Strange Brew** (Polydor) 00468

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**Highway 101: Greatest Hits** (Warner Bros.) 83480

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**Ralph Tresvant** (MCA) 14889

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**Yellowjackets: Greenhouse** (GRP) 10475 ✻

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**Chicago: Greatest Hits 1982-89** (Reprise) 63363

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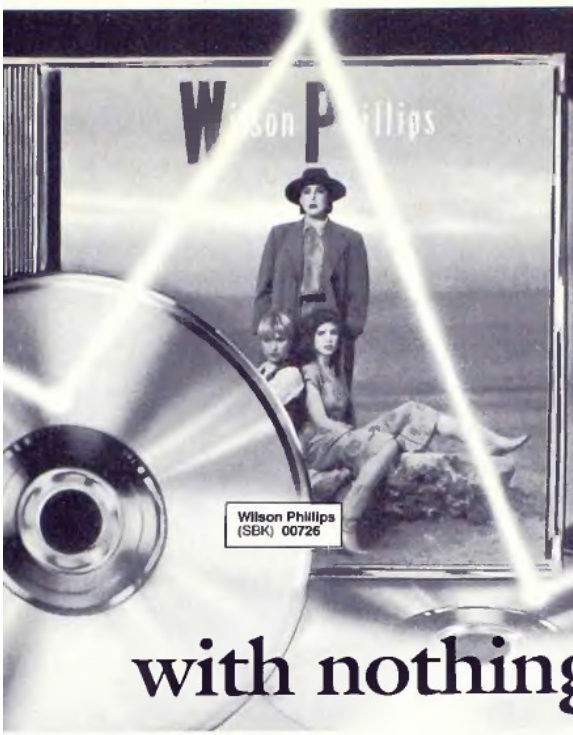


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ALTFF AS

# STYLE

## FOREVER PLAID

Dead men may not wear plaid, but this year, just about anyone who's breathing will be. With fashion taking its cue from the rugged outdoors, the emphasis is on buffalo and blanket plaids. Lumberjack-style jackets by companies such as Woolrich, Pendleton, Nautica and Tommy Hilfiger is the number-one look, in prices ranging from $140 to $350. Plaid hunting shirts have been updated with great bright colors by Willis & Geiger ($85), and Mondo di Marco offers a rich range of *ombré* plaid shirts with a subtle shadow effect ($130). Layering plaid is another way to go, as shown in this Bill Robinson outfit, which includes a plaid jacket ($325) and matching shirt ($125), plus striped trousers ($140). Tartans are also popular. Plaid, by the way, is not synonymous with tartan. Scottish tartans date back to the 13th Century, with each design designating a specific clan.

## HOT SHOPPING: MONTREAL

French culture thrives around Montreal's Rue Saint-Laurent, making it the next best thing to a quick trip to Paris. Here's where to spot the *bon chic, bon genre* (that's beautiful people): America/Tristan and Iseut (1001 Laurier West): Casual clothes with a high-fashion French flavor. • Revenge (3852 Saint-Denis): Cutting-edge clothes at reasonable prices from Montreal's leading designers. • City (3917 Saint-Denis): Avant-garde boutique offering club clothes for disco wannabes. • Scandale (3639 Saint-Laurent): A triplex full of fashions from aviator leathers to vintage Fifties and Sixties looks. • Bar Business (3500 Saint-Laurent): The hottest club in town.

## VIEWPOINT

When people call actor/comedian **Jerry Seinfeld** one of the best-dressed comedians on the stand-up circuit, they're not joking. "What a comedian wears on stage," says the star of NBC's *Seinfeld*, "sets the tone for his entire performance." He says his quick-witted act calls for "power colors, such as navy and red, but not too corporate." That usually means something by Hugo Boss or Armani, Parachute shirts and Kenneth Cole shoes. Off stage, however, he "tries to cultivate the uncultivated look" with jeans, Gap T-shirts and solid-colored oxford shirts. "The toughest fashion decision I want to make is figuring out what pair of Nikes looks best with my jeans."

## NEW WORK ETHIC

During the fall shows in Milan, Paris and New York, men on the runway looked more like immigrants, farmhands and mechanics than like the power brokers of the Eighties. Italian designers Dolce & Gabbana led the way with a parade of Sicilian peasants decked out in saggy sweaters and droopy drawers; back home, Perry Ellis played up patchwork and Basco advanced a thrift-shop chic, complete with fisherman caps and fingerless gloves. Old-fashioned union suits showed up from Andrew Fezza, and Bill Robinson turned mechanic's twill into zip-front jackets. Even classic designers, such as Joseph Abboud, got in on the denim-and-sweat-shirt action. If you can live without designer labels, you'll find these looks for less at surplus stores.

## DRINK NOTES

You can't beat Jack Daniel's for holiday promotions. Check out its 9"x12" tin with a bottle of its famous Old No.7 sour mash and a reproduction of a distiller's thermometer. The boxed set is sold October through December only. The sets are about $30 each, so stock up for Christmas early. . . . Looking for an unusual winter wine? Try Cockburn's Aged Tawny Port. The ten-year-old is fruity and vigorous (about $15), while the 20-year-old is elegant and complex (about $30). . . . The Hotel Association of New York held its annual bartender competition and the winner was The Peninsula Hotel on Fifth Avenue with a drink named—surprise!—The Big Apple. It's sort of like cider with apple liqueur.

## STYLE METER

| OUTERWEAR | IN | OUT |
|---|---|---|
| STYLE | Duffel coats, varsity jackets, car coats and toggle coats | Down jackets or coats, fur coats and military coats on civilians |
| COLORS AND FABRICS | Bold plaids; waxed cotton, suede, wool melton, leather and cashmere | Nylon/wool blends and corduroy |
| DETAILING | Detachable hoods, large pockets and drawstring waists | Elastic waists and cuffs and oversized lapels or buttons |



Where & How to Buy on page 171.

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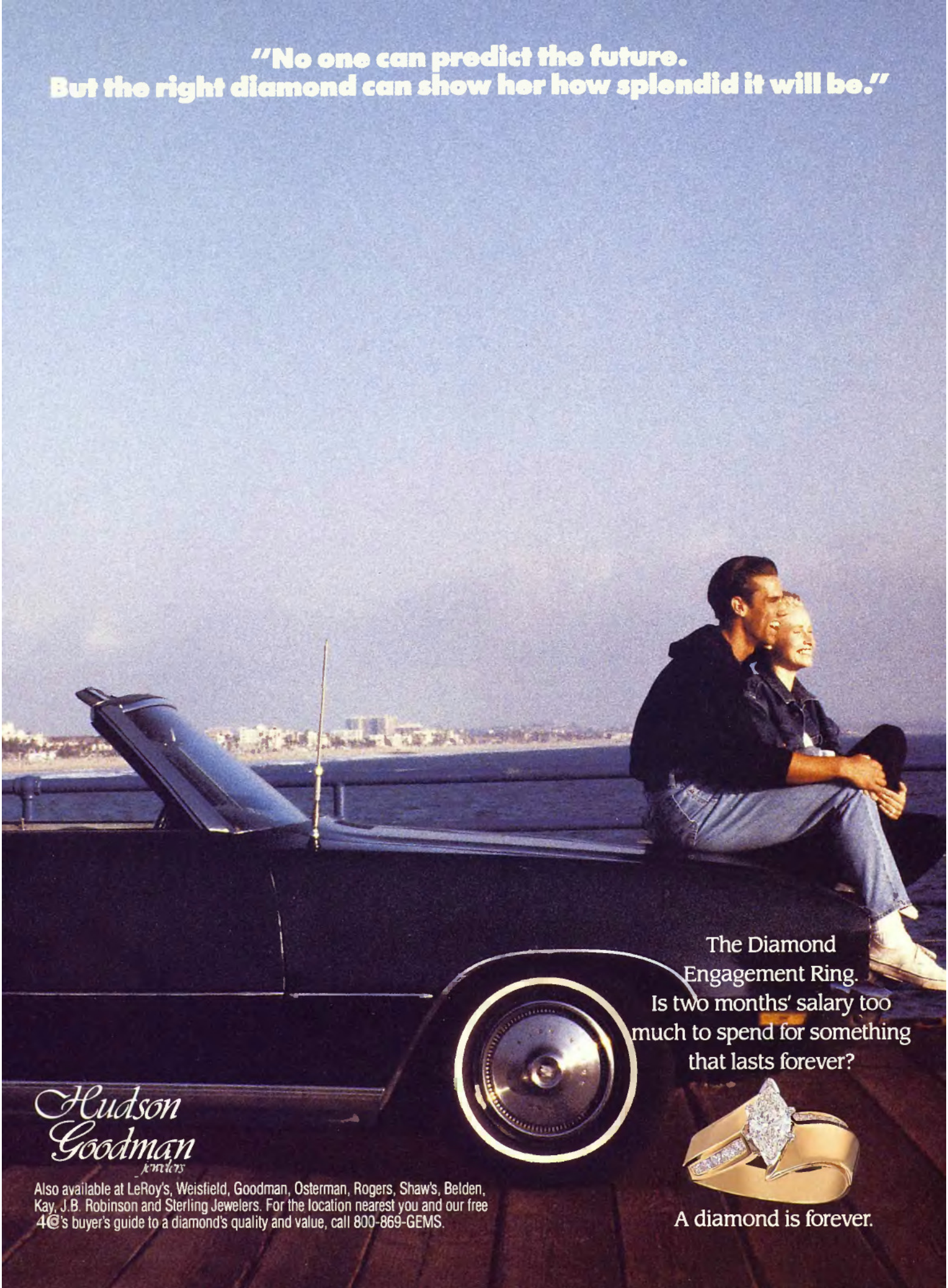

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By ASA BABER

# THE P.C. SEX MANUAL FOR MEN

The sacrifices I make for you guys! I tell you, it brings tears to my eyes. Here I am, one isolated asshole on the highway of life, and yet I have just devoted all my time and effort to compiling *The Politically Correct Sex Manual for Men*.

You see, men, I know you are not getting laid on a regular basis. I know the women in your lives are picky, picky, picky. I know they make the rules and then change them without warning. They reject you and then act like they want to cut your weenies off. Come on, gentlemen, don't pretend it's a garden of sensuality out there. This is Ace the Base. You write to me and talk to me about your lives, and I know better.

So, as a service to you, I went out into that stinking, dangerous jungle of sexual combat and I interviewed *millions* of women, asking them one simple question: "How can we better please you in bed, and how can we do that in a politically correct fashion so that we do not offend any of you in any way?"

To start, you have to learn to be more sensitive to the desires and demands of the women in your lives. There is a right way to do things, guys, then there is the male way to do things. Let's shape up!

*Politically correct introductions:* If you see a woman who appeals to you, here are the five acceptable things you can say by way of introducing yourself:

1. "I was noticing how far superior you are to me, and I was wondering if I could just worship you for a while."

2. "I apologize for being male and for oppressing you throughout your life, but if it will help, I'll let you take me home and call me names and cover me with cookie batter."

3. "That Gloria Steinem is a hell of a penetrating social critic, isn't she?"

4. "I stand here before you in guilt and depression because I am an unworthy male, but if I lend you my gold credit card for a week, can we talk afterward?"

5. "Do you agree with me that masculinity is the root of all evil?"

*Politically correct foreplay:* There are only four permissible techniques:

1. Pin handwritten feminist slogans on the pillowcase ("So many men, so little intelligence," etc.), then lick them one at a time.

2. Without any physical contact, watch video-tape replays of the National Organization for Women's latest convention.

3. Read *Our Bodies, Ourselves* aloud as you kneel before one red candle and a saucer of almond oil, while your partner stands over you in her red garter belt and red stockings with lipstick on her nipples.

4. Stroke her inner thighs with a peacock feather while you hum *I Am Woman* and prepare to pump fur (see below).

*Politically correct sexual positions:* Variations of these six satisfactory postures can be practiced by you only after years of obedience, and only with your partner's permission:

1. Woman astride, triumphant; man beneath, servile.

2. Woman beneath, rebellious; man above, contrite.

3. Woman in front, filled with integrity; man behind, deeply aware of his faults and vulnerability.

4. Woman upside down, victorious; man upside down, dizzy.

5. Woman on her left side, reserved and unbreakable; man on his right side, out of breath.

6. Woman on her right side, dominant; man on his left side, cringing.

*Politically correct songs to be sung while pumping fur:* The art of fur pumping was first described in my April 1988 *Men* column. Refer to it for general advice. However, understand that the true fur pumper always sings in appreciation while he labors. The following six songs are considered P.C.:

1. *Whistle While You Work*
2. *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*
3. *Feelings*
4. *Younger than Springtime*
5. The *Leave It to Beaver* theme
6. *Climb Every Mountain*

*Politically correct expressions for the male during orgasm:* Yes, it takes some self-control to censor your language at this tender moment, but here we are in P.C. Land, where censorship is the order of the day, so you'd better behave. There are only five authorized expressions as you denigrate yourself by losing control of your seed:

1. "Long live the rights of women!"

2. "Oh, I have just used you as a vessel of pleasure for my throbbing spitfire, and that was thoughtless of me!"

3. "That Gloria Steinem is a hell of a penetrating social critic, isn't she?"

4. "I'm sorry it happened before you were done, and I fully understand your right as an independent woman to take your pleasure elsewhere tonight with anyone you choose."

5. "Hold on, I'm coming." (Note: to be used only in extreme emergencies, and never more than once a year.)

*Politically correct terms of endearment after intercourse:* Since you will be tired and she probably will not be, these four pet sayings for her must be carefully memorized. (Not only that but you must remember to employ at least two of them. Complete silence after sex, no matter how much it may please you, no matter how appropriate it may seem, is *verboten*.)

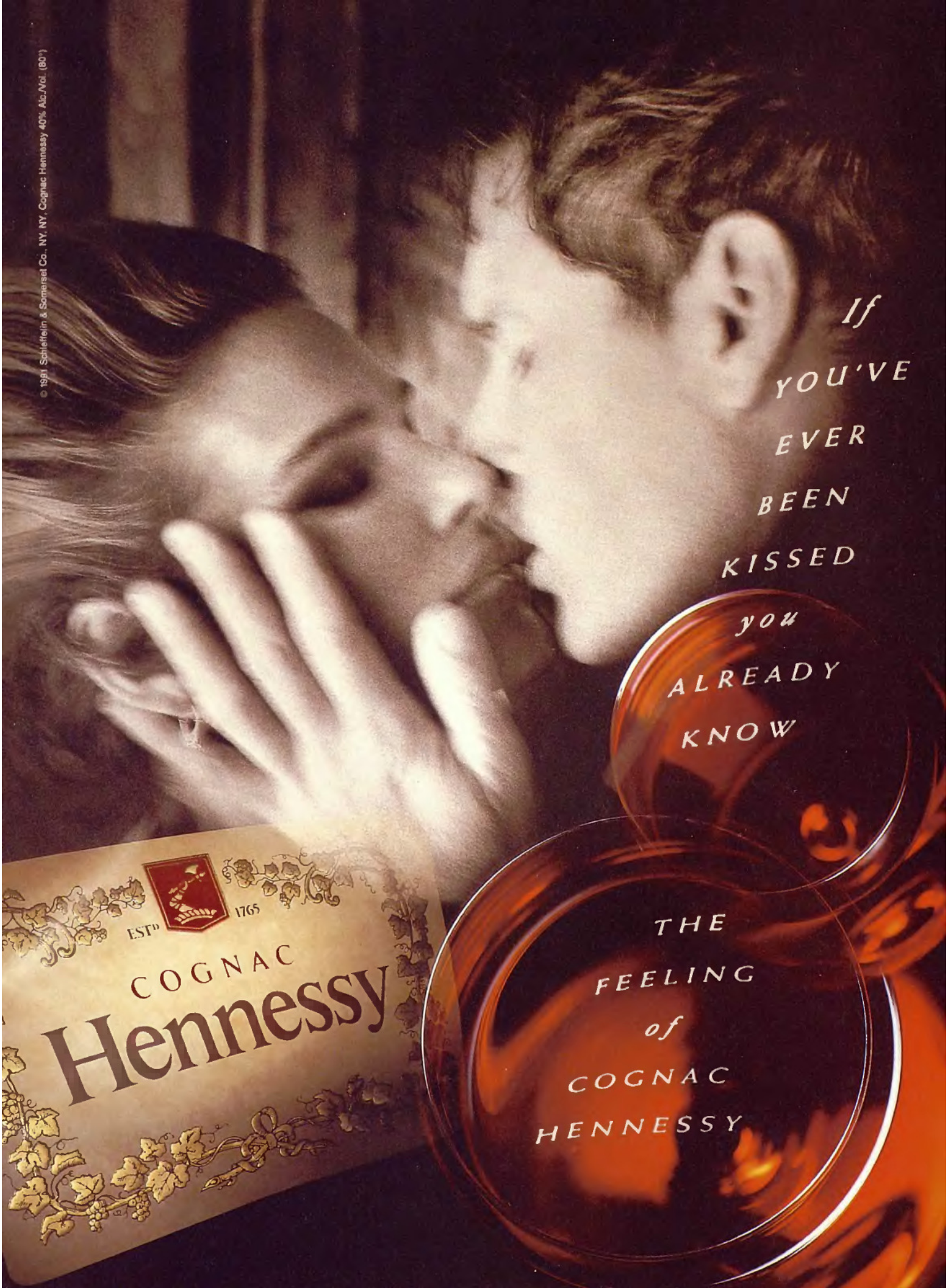
1. "Thank you, thank you, thank you."

2. "It was incredible for me, so I hope it wasn't just nauseating and disgusting for you."

3. "It is enough that I, a poor male, have now been given a hint of paradise, and should death overtake me at this moment, I will happily accept my fate."

4. "As God is my witness, I recognize that you have in no way humbled yourself to me by your actions and that you are still a far superior human being."

Needless to say, there is a lot more to tell you. I mean, I haven't even begun to list those things that are considered politically *incorrect* during sex these days. But then again, that would take an encyclopedia. A big one with many volumes.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# ME AND THE MEN'S MOVEMENT

By CYNTHIA HEIMEL

I was on the *Sally Jessy Raphaël* show! It was really stupid! They called and asked me if I wanted to be on a program about the men's movement. Because I have a book out, I said sure.

Guys, it was like swimming through *The National Enquirer*. There was this main fellow, this poor little pimple of a man, who had somehow sniffed the air and found out that there were all sorts of men's groups starting up, that men were feeling the need to communicate with other men about how empty and shallow and painful their lives felt, and this little pimple thought he could cash in and become famous if he started a group called SIR. Who knows what it stands for?

What the show ended up being about was whether bars' and night clubs' advertising "ladies' night" and giving women free drinks was illegal or wrong or what. Endless people walked up to the microphone and said stupefyingly moronic things. They said he talked like a "queer or something." They made fun of his clothes, they told him he was out of his mind and ugly.

Actually, I agreed with him. I think that free drinks for women is discriminatory and a bad idea. The point to ladies' night is to get women into bars and get them drunk so that men can score. It reinforces the idea of women as passive sex objects who need to be taken care of and who need to be tricked into having sex.

But they wouldn't let me think that. I was supposed to disagree with the poor little pimple. And whenever I stopped arguing, the producer of the show waved her hands at me in frustration. On the television screen, beneath my name, it said something like, THINKS MEN JUST WANT TO CONTROL WOMEN.

Which was not what I said at all. What I said to the producer in the pre-interview was something like, "The men's movement is a good thing, because men have been unhappy and confused for a really long time and it's been hell living with them. But I'm nervous about one thing: There are men out there who have unresolved fear and hatred of women and who will decide that that is a perfect excuse to take back all the power, to try to control women again."

And then the pimple fulfilled my prophecies by asking why there were women's studies at colleges when there were no men's studies.

Naturally, this made me crazy, because everyone with even half a brain knows that the reason they have designated a little dusty room at the end of a disused corridor as the "women's-studies program" at certain universities is that everything else taught in universities *is* men's studies.

Then some guy got up and told Sally Jessy that auto insurance was also discriminatory against men. She blew him off, but I thought he was probably right, my basic position being that women and men should be treated as equals, and that means that women will have to give up certain courtesies and niceties. They can't be (A) treated as equals and (B) taken care of. I strongly advocate women's picking up the check on dates, even though they are far from being men's equals economically.

However, I still believe in alimony in certain cases, such as when a woman has subjugated her time and earning power to her husband by being a homemaker and mother during her most financially productive years.

Before they introduced me, they showed a clip of *Thelma & Louise*, which I think is a terrific movie, but when people say it's a meaningful feminist tract, I go to sleep.

Now, if they had shown *Old Yeller*, I would have known what to do. *Old Yeller* is the most cogent argument for the need for a men's movement. It's pure and toxic propaganda. A boy's dog, which he loves to distraction, gets rabies and the boy has to shoot it. The single message in the movie for boys is, "Do not cry, do not acknowledge that you have any feelings at all. Then you will be a real man."

Not that I got to bring up any of that, because you have to yell at members of the panel or the audience; there is no discussion. And I really wanted to talk about *Iron John*, the Robert Bly book that has been on the best-seller list for ages and seems to be the cornerstone of the amorphous men's movement.

I especially like it when Bly talks about what he calls "soft men"—men who have embraced feminism—and about how they seem to lack vibrancy of spirit, how they seem shapeless and empty. Men like that remind me of certain progressive clergymen who were around in the Sixties. They'd have "rap" groups and talk about being "with it," and were so dull and synthetic. You had to laugh at them. Women have a lot of trouble with "sensitive men" who say all the right things, because there seems to be something dishonest at their core.

But one thing Bly takes as a given is that men need a king. Someone to worship and follow. Why do men need a king? What's the point? I don't get it. Do they feel insecure without a role model? If they do, they're in trouble, since all they have is George Bush and Arnold Schwarzenegger. Women have even worse role models, but we don't seem to mind so much. Maybe we're used to inventing ourselves.

It's exciting to see that men have noticed these bad role models and the life-denying propaganda being thrown at them from every direction, especially by inane TV shows that put a pimple of a man up and tell us he is the new direction. If you were really paranoid, you'd think they did it on purpose. They picked the stupidest men's-movement guy they could find so that men wouldn't buy it. So that men would keep plugging away in their narrow little niche in society; so that they wouldn't rock any boats or make any trouble.

I hope men make a lot of trouble. I just hope it isn't directed against women. We wouldn't want blood in the streets.

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# THE PLAYBOY ADVISOR

I just fell in love, and it's the worst feeling. I'm a junior in college and this is the first time in three years that I've felt this way about a woman. Her name is Sally; she's a junior and she's very popular—too popular, actually. She has this habit of sleeping around with different guys but never longer than one night with each. A mutual friend introduced us at a frat party (she was surrounded by guys—mostly old boyfriends) and confided to me that he had spent a night with her. He described the sex as feverish and said she was like "an antelope on meth," meaning she had long legs and moved very fast. Intrigued, I started dating Sally and we had a genuinely good time. Then we had sex (I was surprised that she was responsible enough to have a supply of rubbers). At one point, she crouched on all fours while I entered her from behind. As I held her smooth ass with my hands, she began moving up and down, then in a circular motion, faster and faster, in ways I had never imagined. It was a mind-blistering experience. And that was it. I've seen her plenty of times since then; she's always friendly but lets me know politely that she has moved on. I told her that I loved her, that she was the first thing I thought of in the morning and the last thing I thought of at night, and that although everyone else thought she was a slut, I didn't. Her reply? It was a mean thing for me to say, I am just immature and she doesn't think she could be serious about me. Why is she behaving this way?—D. D., Boston, Massachusetts.

*Possibly because you are immature—first, by being surprised that she was responsible about condoms and, second, by mentioning the S word. It's not so unusual for women (and men) to be more sexually adventurous when they're younger (we define younger as anything under 65). A prediction: The guy with whom she'll eventually have a steady relationship (and whom she'll possibly marry) will resemble her—a love-'em-and-leave-'em type who decided to grow up and is looking for a friend and lover in the same body. Follow her example and focus on someone else.*

A friend of mine is getting married and has asked me to be his best man. In this postmodern age, what are a best man's duties?—J. R., Chicago, Illinois.

*Basically, the best man is supposed to do everything the groom can't do or is too distracted to do. That includes arranging for the bachelor dinner, if there is to be one. You're also in charge of the ushers at the wedding. Make sure they know what to do and are at the church well before the ceremony starts. You are to help the groom dress for the wedding and get him to the church on time. Make sure he has the marriage license. Also, have him give*

*you the check for the minister, place it in an envelope and give it to the minister after the service. You're also in charge of the bride's wedding ring. You're obliged to give the first toast to the couple at the reception (short and sweet is never wrong, the opposite sometimes is). Send a telegram in the groom's name to the bride's parents, thanking them for the fabulous wedding and their fabulous daughter. Make sure the newlyweds' luggage is taken care of, their exit vehicle is ready and the arrangements for the honeymoon lodging are in order. Also, make sure the groom is reasonably sober until the moment of the wedding and, if he has cold feet, help him over the wall.*

The other night, I was making love to my fiancée in the missionary position when I raised her legs and ankles high in the air. As I entered her, she let out a yelp and I had to stop. She said she had a tipped uterus and some positions were painful for her. Other than that, she says her doctors say there are no complications with her condition, which is shared by lots of women. I didn't want to press her for more details, because it was a sensitive subject—but is this a serious problem?—C. L., New Orleans, Louisiana.

*Plenty of women have tipped, or retroverted, uteruses. The term merely refers to how the uterus sits in a woman's body. The only problem associated with it is mild discomfort in some sexual positions. The pain varies from woman to woman and sometimes disappears with sufficient arousal (her uterus and cervix can move quite a bit during sex and also throughout her menstrual cycle). While her cervix is insensitive, her uterus is not, and neither are her ovaries. The thrusting of a penis at certain angles may hit either organ. Try to avoid positions that cause your fiancée pain.*

I'm about to buy a bomber-style jacket made of pigskin. When I spoke to the salesman about cleaning and maintaining it, he became a bit evasive and didn't give complete answers. Are there special procedures I have to follow to care for pigskin? Is it any different from regular leather? Can I have it dry-cleaned?—F. D., San Francisco, California.

*Pigskin can be cleaned by a special method used on most leathers and suedes (regular dry cleaning and leather cleaning employ different chemical processes). If your coat is constructed from panels varying in texture and weight or from different animals, there is the possibility that some panels may fade more than others. And some manufacturers use a glue that may leave a dark residue after the leather is cleaned. Only an experienced leather craftsman, not a salesman, can evaluate stains and other irregularities to determine whether or not they can be removed successfully. Pigskin, though growing in popularity, is not an inexpensive material, and clothing made from it is usually quite pricey. So if you're willing to take a chance, buy the jacket. At the worst, you could cut it up and make a few high-priced footballs.*

During the Gulf war, my lover and I watched the news in bed. One night, there was a story about a soldier writing a love letter to his wife. My girlfriend thought that was incredibly romantic. I'd like to write her a love letter, but the prospect of dusting off my pen and notepaper reminds me of the English-composition class that nearly kept me from getting my college degree. I'm also sure that anything I write will sound corny. Are there rules to writing a good love letter?—C. R., Knoxville, Tennessee.

*After a great weekend with your girlfriend, pretend you're an intrepid reporter who was peeping in the windows. Describe in detail the favorite moments of your lovemaking, how much she turned you on, how your time together sticks in your mind like peanut butter. (Humor sells better than sap, and romantic porn gets saved.) Make it short and sweet and at all costs avoid the immortally banal "I love you with all my heart"—any smart woman will be skeptical. If you're adventurous, leave the letter on the windshield of her car or fax it to her at work. If you don't think she'll go for an instant replay, scrawl* I LOVE YOU *in Magic Marker on your stomach (or elsewhere, if there's room) before your next romp. Still can't get your pen up? Remind her of the wise words of novelist Anatole France: "Lovers who love truly do not write down their happiness."*

While cleaning out my desk, I came across several manila envelopes filled with old tax forms and other paperwork that I've filed over the years. Do I need to



ILLUSTRATION BY PATER SATO

save all this junk? I don't want to lug around boxes full of paperwork for the rest of my life. I've got most of my numbers in my computer, anyway.—S. R., Boise, Idaho.

*As long as you're honest, there's a three-year statute of limitations from the day you filed, after which the IRS can't audit. But if you don't file, or if the IRS can prove you didn't report income exceeding 25 percent of what you did report, that rule goes out the window. (If six years have passed since you filed a phony return, you can't be put in jail, but you can be taken to court to recover back taxes and penalties.) Once that third anniversary arrives, don't just pitch entire folders of documents. Hang on to records for assets you still own, such as real estate, stocks and your home and improvements you've made to it. You may also want to keep your returns—somebody besides the IRS, such as a loan officer, may ask to look them over. Even if you file electronically or compute your taxes with a computer program, the IRS won't accept any rows or columns without paper backups. A friend who survived an audit said filing his receipts and documents for each category of itemized expense, deduction or credit saved him hours of bickering with the tax man. Play it safe. Relatively few taxpayers are audited—in 1990, only one of 91 people who earned between $50,000 and $100,000 were called in—but if you're one of them, that hardly matters.*

About a decade ago, the *Advisor* got several letters about John Dillinger's mammoth penis allegedly being preserved at the Smithsonian Institution, and you claimed that Dillinger was really a woman (you were kidding, right?). Recently, a co-worker told me at lunch that after Napoleon died, souvenir hunters salvaged his penis as an oddity. He said that today it's in a museum in France, slightly shriveled but kept on display with other parts of his body. Is this on the up-and-up, or is it just another, ahem, phallusy?—M. A., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

*Who brings this stuff up over lunch? Napoleon's one-inch, 203-year-old penis was offered at auction in 1972 by Christie's, according to "The Book of Lists." The organ, which "resembled a sea horse," failed to receive the minimum bid. Supposedly, Napoleon's confessor-priest obtained the penis after the emperor's death in 1821, perhaps during the autopsy. At that procedure, attended by 17 people, Bonaparte's head was shaved so locks of his hair could be given out as mementos, his heart was placed in a silver vase for his widow and his stomach was dropped into a silver pepper pot. A portion of his intestines ended up at London's Royal College of Surgeons but was destroyed in a 1940 air raid. Napoleon had crowned himself emperor because he insisted that no one else was worthy to do it. We wonder who felt worthy enough to whack off his pecker.*

The latest trend in ties is toward bold, colorful patterns. I like the look and purchased a couple for myself. But, looking at them against my white shirts, I'm not sure they are a good match. I don't want to replace all of my shirts. Any suggestions?—M. M., Seattle, Washington.

*We always buy shirts and ties at the same time so that we know they will be compatible. When we get home, we mix and match with our existing wardrobe, in search of those happy fashion surprises that make life worth while. According to the fashion police, solid colors are competing with the traditional white dress shirt. Gray is a popular color for the coming season, as are olive green, berry and varying shades of blue. But white shirts are still the number-one seller. So don't think replacement, think supplement.*

Insurance premiums for my high-profile performance car are really outrageous—and they get more expensive each year. Are there ways to reduce these costs? Help! I can't impress too many women in a Yugo.—R. S., Kansas City, Missouri.

*Besides the obvious ways to save—having no accidents or moving violations—there are things you can do. First, shop around. Some insurers are definitely cheaper than others. If you're a former military officer, you're eligible to insure with United Services Automobile Association. U.S.A.A. frequently undercuts the major insurance firms in pricing, and it delivers great service. See whether your company (or club or organization of which you're a member) offers a special insurance program. Be sure to check whether your insurer demands a premium for your performance car. Some companies don't. Consider switching if yours does. Insuring your home, car, boat and motorcycle with one company can save you money. Some firms offer safe-driver reduction; others offer discounts if your car is equipped with an alarm, an air bag and/or ABS brakes. Pay premiums in advance. Budget programs usually involve a finance charge. Unless you can't get coverage any other way, we don't generally recommend purchasing insurance through a car dealer. Even though it's convenient, there's a markup. One prominent insurance agent carries the maximum deductible allowable to secure the lower premium on comprehensive and collision coverage. He puts the savings into a money fund and maintains a balance equal to the amount of the deductible. Accident-free, he has realized significant savings.*

For the past eight months, I've been dating the same woman. We're both in our late 20s, and our sex is comfortable, uninhibited and incredible. We're both fans of oral sex, and I've been going down on her to my heart's content. Lately, I've noticed fluctuation in the taste, flow and thickness of her vaginal lubrication. What's going on here? Does it have to do with her period, her mood, my tongue?—N. C., New York, New York.

*Yes, her vaginal secretions are affected by her menstrual cycle. Varying levels of two hormones (estrogen and progesterone) influence the characteristics of cervical mucus—a rather thick fluid—before and after ovulation. When she's at her most fertile, her estrogen level soars, promoting the output of enough of this sticky stuff to provide a hospitable environment for sperm as well as to lubricate the walls of her vagina. After the egg is released and estrogen and progesterone production drops off, the vagina becomes increasingly drier—that is, until menstruation, when all hell breaks loose.*

*But the lubricant you probably enjoy the most is a liquid secreted by the vaginal walls during arousal in a process called sweating. (Bartholin's glands, once considered the source of this fluid, are now thought to be responsible for a mere few drops.) The bottom line? Let her sweat—and don't sweat it.*

Last winter, I traveled the Southwest with just two bags, but I wound up coming home with six. Do you know any ways to circumvent the two-checked-bags-for-free limit on airline flights?—D. S., Boston, Massachusetts.

*Are you asking us to be your accomplice in an activity that violates the fine print on a ticket issued by a commercial deregulated air carrier? Let's do it. Here are a few: Check two bags with the curbside attendant, then put those stubs into your pocket and check two more bags at the counter. Or simply bribe a skycap to handle all of your bags (these spirits of free enterprise have been known to get around the red tape if motivated). Tactic three: Buy two tickets, check baggage on both, then turn in the second ticket for a refund.*

When receiving a blow job, is it polite to give the person some warning when you are about to come?—R. J., Riverside, Illinois.

*This strikes us as an issue that would come up only the first time you become intimate. Let's assume that the woman has initiated fellatio and that she feels comfortable with the act and displays competence. Hold that thought. You should ask yourself, Does she intend this as foreplay or is it a self-contained sexual act? If she ignores your trying gently to coax her to intercourse (if that is what you want), you can safely assume she is goal-oriented. In which case, she will know what's coming and to make an announcement about it may simply be considered bragging.*

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*All reasonable questions—from fashion, food and drink, stereo and sports cars to dating problems, taste and etiquette—will be personally answered if the writer includes a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Send all letters to The Playboy Advisor, Playboy, 680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611. The most provocative, pertinent queries will be presented on these pages each month.*

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# POWER PLAY

## the new supreme court's war on freedom

Let's start with a small story: Last summer, I received notice from a local court that I had ignored a traffic ticket and that, consequently, the fine was doubled. The only problem with this was that I had never received the first ticket. I went to court to find out what had happened.

I had apparently crossed paths with a police officer akin to the Los Angeles cop who signed off with the memorable ditty "They give me a stick, they give me a gun, they pay me fifty Gs to have some fun."

When I saw the officer in court, I remembered a day when a voice from a squad car had asked me to move on. (I was waiting for a parking spot to open up in front of a wind-surfing shop.) I went around the block and tried again. The cruiser pulled up and, rather than go through the territorial thing again, I moved off. The officer had written a ticket for double parking and then tossed it, knowing I would lose either $25 or a day's wages. Street justice in the minor leagues.

When I told this anecdote to a friend, I described the officer as an Erik Estrada look-alike, a gym jockey wearing pants so tight you could see the testicular atrophy caused by steroid consumption. The friend, a politically savvy urban survivor from downtown Chicago, said, "Hey, these guys have to deal with the scum of the earth. Give them their little attempts at self-assertion."

I argued that in my suburb, the quality of the scum of the earth was a little bit higher than in downtown Chicago. Sure, in totalitarian states, maybe everyone is scum in the eyes of the police. But I wanted a police department that treated scum like, well, American citizens.

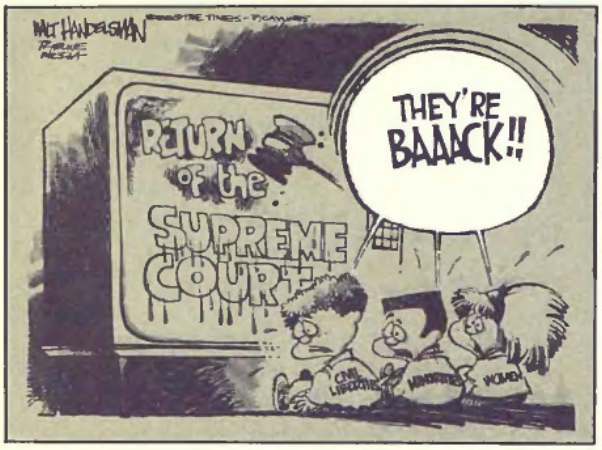
God, will I miss Thurgood Marshall. As an NAACP lawyer, Marshall fought for the liberty of an entire class of citizens. As a Justice, he championed individual rights for all Americans. He was sensitive to lynch-mob mentality. His last act as a Justice was a perfectly targeted dissent from the direction taken by Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist's Court. "Power," wrote Marshall, "not reason, is the currency of this Court's decision making."

Here's an example. In *Arizona vs. Fulminante*, Oreste Fulminante, whose stepdaughter had been murdered, was coerced by the FBI into incriminating himself in the murder. In ruling on the case, the Court voted 5–4 to excuse coerced confessions as "harmless error" if other evidence exists to convict the defendant. That means that if Dirty Harry accidentally steps on your genitals or gets some "monkey-slapping" time with his baton—and his buddies doing honest police work find real evidence—then his misconduct should be excused. Throughout his career on the bench, Rehnquist has argued that if the scum of the earth are as guilty as sin, there is no rational point in punishing the prosecution for overzealous and extralegal behavior.

Rehnquist first voiced the idea that excess be excused as harmless error nearly 40 years ago, when he clerked for Justice Robert H. Jackson. It was rejected out of hand. He tried again in various dissents throughout the Nixon years. He finally got his way in a Court stocked by Reagan and Bush.

In his last session on the Court, Marshall lit many candles to mourn diminished liberties. In *Florida vs. Bostick*, he dissented when the Court supported the right of police to board buses and conduct on-the-spot warrantless searches and interrogations without reason to believe the passengers have commited a crime. Of course, in that case, say conservatives, the defendant was as guilty as sin. He allowed police to look through his bags and they found one pound of cocaine. Stupidity is its own punishment. Don't burden the police with the exclusionary rule when they catch one of the bad guys.

In *Florida vs. Bostick*, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, who hasn't been on a bus in decades, wrote the majority opinion. She may as well have been Rehnquist's secretary taking dictation. She/he sniffed, "So long as a reasonable person would feel free to disregard the police and go about his business . . . the encounter is consensual and no reasonable suspicion is required." If members of the Gestapo board your bus or train, you have the right to deliver them a lecture on your




rights. Try it sometime, asshole.

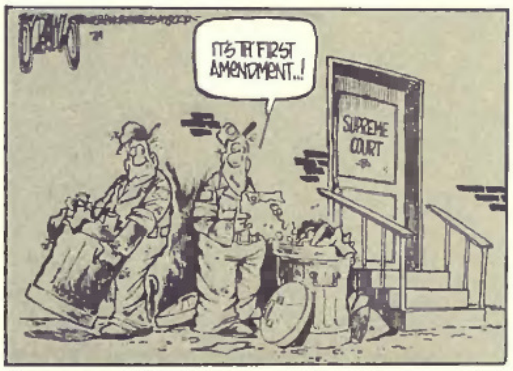
What people like retired Justices William J. Brennan and Marshall brought to the Supreme Court was a healthy respect for the rights of the other passengers on the bus.

What is now likely to happen when a citizen asserts his or her constitutional rights? To see how limited our rights have become, we have to look back only 35 years. Laurence H. Tribe, professor of constitutional law at Harvard, describes the following: "Dollree Mapp was a middle-class homeowner who rented out the first floor of her house to help make a living for herself. One May afternoon in 1957, the police arrived at her door and demanded to be let in. They said they were looking for a man who was wanted for questioning about a bombing. Miss Mapp called her attorney and then asked to see the search warrant. When the officers replied that they did not have one, she forbade them to enter her home and sent them away. Three hours later, the police, still without a warrant, broke down the door to Miss Mapp's house and charged upstairs to her apartment. When she demanded to see a search warrant, the police waved a worthless piece of paper at her. Dollree snatched the paper and stashed it in her turtleneck sweater. The three policemen tackled her, handcuffed her and rummaged under her clothing to retrieve what they falsely claimed to be a warrant. The officers then proceeded to tear up the place looking for anything they could find. In Miss Mapp's bedroom, the police found some books and pictures they considered obscene. Mapp testified that she was merely storing the items and other personal articles for a former tenant who had moved without leaving a forwarding address. Despite that fact and the illegal and outrageous nature of the police invasion of her home, Miss Mapp was sentenced to one to seven years in prison on an obscenity charge." The 1961 Supreme Court overturned that conviction. The Supreme Court of 1991 is setting precedents that would excuse the officers' conduct, if not actively encourage it.

Our nation and legal system have always been devoted to the principle that you are innocent until proven guilty: Better for one guilty man to go free than for an innocent party to be subjected to police enthusiasm (or simply brutality).

The media response to the Rehnquist Court has been to almost gleefully embrace certain notions: that the swing to the right is inevitable (as though the Constitution were the prisoner in *The Pit and the Pendulum*), that liberals are complaining only because now it's their ox that is being gored, their sacred cow being slaughtered. The confirmation hearings for Clarence Thomas will discuss rights and issues, but what has really changed is the role of the Court.

Traditionally, the Constitution set the limits and the Court blew the whistle when players ran afoul of the law. Now the Justices have walked off the playing field. The Court is less a referee (any evidence gained by violating the Constitution will be excluded) and more a cheerleader (or flack) for the boys in blue.

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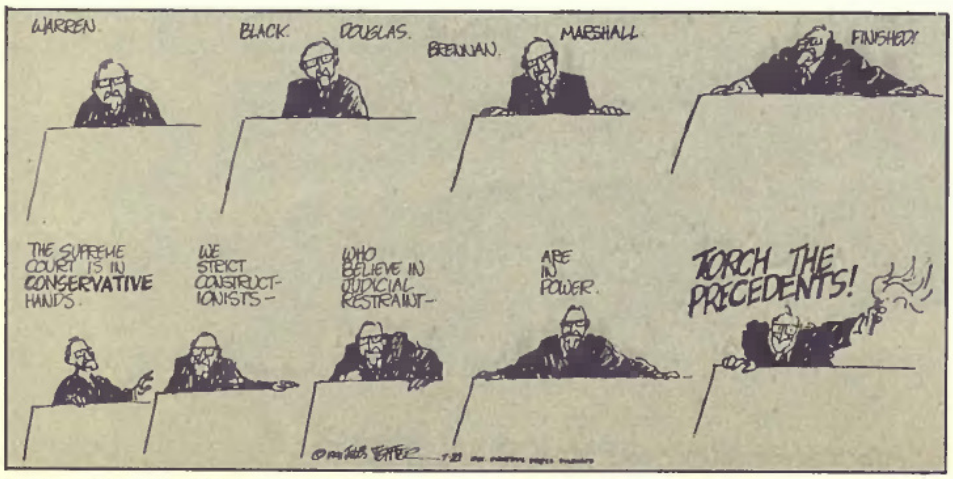
What does that mean? Here in Chicago, we have a police chief who, upon returning from a visit to Communist China, said there was a lot to appreciate in totalitarian regimes. Hitler, he opined, had a good record on law enforcement. The Constitution created too many individual rights, engendered too much concern for the rights of the criminal. The result, he said, is that "we're living in an armed camp."

This is a top cop who brags about his force's being "the toughest gang in town." When he proposed a robust stop-and-frisk program, he boasted that the tough new measure would anger the A.C.L.U. but that it would be "six months before they get me into court."

Now he doesn't even have to worry about that. Justice Rehnquist has his own little sign-off ditty: "They give me a clerk, they give me a robe, they stock the Court, I'm a libertyphobe."

—JAMES R. PETERSEN

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# NEWSFRONT

*what's happening in the sexual and social arenas*

## CRUISE CONTROL

PORTLAND, OREGON—*Beware the latest thing in cruise control: Vice squads seize the cars of men who patronize prostitutes. Once an undercover female police officer*

*gets an offer of money for sex, the John is charged and his car is towed. First-time offenders usually get their cars back after they pay towing and storage charges and the cost of the decoy operation. Repeat offenders lose their cars. In the first six months of 1991, the city nabbed 207 vehicles, including a tractor-trailer loaded with candy bars.*

## TEST THYSELF

LOS ANGELES—*A former L.A. County sheriff's-department sergeant was convicted of gross vehicular manslaughter after crashing into a disabled car while driving with a blood-alcohol level of .23 percent—almost three times the legal limit. The fatal crash occurred after the officer left a restaurant where he had been celebrating his transfer to the department's new drug-testing program.*

## PROBLEM? WHAT PROBLEM?

TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA—*A gynecologist will go before the state medical board because a patient complained that his massage treatment of an ovarian cyst was too stimulating sexually. The woman told state investigators that she became embarrassed after she experienced an orgasm during the fifth treatment. After another orgasm during her next session, she filed a complaint.*

## NO FATAL ATTRACTION

LOS ANGELES—*Under a new California law, the victims of severe, ongoing harassment from former spouses, boyfriends, girlfriends or anyone else can have them charged with a crime called felony stalking. While it's difficult either to enforce a restraining order or to catch the culprit in the act, documented harassment now can put a convicted stalker in the slammer for up to three years.*

## THE WAR ON COMPASSION

WASHINGTON, D.C.—*Several public-interest groups have spent years in court attempting to protect the medicinal use of pot. To no avail, it seems: In a Machiavellian move, Public Health Service chief James O. Mason simply eliminated a program that permitted a small number of people to legally obtain marijuana for treatment of glaucoma and the side effects of chemotherapy. The 34 existing patients will continue to get their pot. But the Public Health Service, concerned that the Government's participation created "a perception that this stuff can't be so bad," felt that any more patients would be at odds with the Administration's war on drugs.*

## I LOVE NEW YORK

ALBANY—*New York State, which has on occasion debated raising money by selling assault rifles seized in drug raids, has gone into business as a porno purveyor. State revenuers hope to offset some of their budget deficit with the proceeds from the auction of a video dealer's 1400 adult videos (they were confiscated in lieu of back taxes). J. Alan Davitt, executive director of the New York State Catholic Conference, didn't approve and compared the state's action to selling dope.*

## PAYING TO PLAY

WASHINGTON, D.C.—*How much would you pay for a condom? In a world-wide survey, the privately funded Population Crisis Committee found dozens of places where the price of birth-control pills or condoms represents a major expense—in some developing countries as much as 25 percent of the average annual income.*

## GUERRILLA ABORTIONISTS

SAN FRANCISCO—*Women's health centers report an increasing number of requests from individuals and feminist groups for training and equipment that would permit home abortions in the event that the procedure is outlawed. According to the Federation of Feminist Women's Health Centers, which has four clinics in California, most women in the pro-choice movement fully expect the Supreme Court to eventually overturn "Roe vs. Wade," the 1973 decision that legalized abortion.*

## SEX ED 101

SACRAMENTO—*A three-judge appellate panel agreed two to one that licking a man's scrotum is a form of oral copulation prohibited under Section 288a of the California Penal Code. The panel then scolded the state legislature for being so squeamish and euphemistic in describing what constitutes sex organs and what should or should not be done with them. In concluding that*

*the scrotum was part of the total package, Justice Arthur J. Scotland wrote, "As a matter of common sense, a penis without the testes and scrotum is like a flintlock rifle without a flint and flash powder or a bow without a string and arrow."*

# READER

### THE WAR ON NUDITY: ROLL CALL

I'm writing in response to "The War on Nudity, Part One: The Great Pinup Controversy" (*The Playboy Forum*, July). I believe Lois Robinson could have solved her problem with the offensive posters cheaper and faster. All she needed to do was hang up a few male centerfolds. My bet is that her foreman and male co-workers would quickly have decided that nude posters of either sex don't belong in the workplace.

Sharon Edwards
Fresno, California

I'm a 27-year-old woman who works as a ship fitter at a yard where Navy cruisers and destroyers are built. Regarding "The Great Pinup Controversy," you probably think I'm replying to let you know that I, too, have been "visually assaulted" by the boys' pinups, calendars and posters. The fact is that because of Lois Robinson's "victory" concerning the sexual-harassment laws, I have had to remove photographs, magazine cutouts and pinups from my locker and inside cover of my toolbox. Although my taste is quite different from the average Joe's, the guys always got a kick out of my beefcake shots. Now, thanks to Robinson, my company has adopted a blanket penalty of a five-day suspension (unpaid) for *any* employee in possession of such material! So it looks like we've all been neutered and chintzed!

Lauri A. Loftus (spayed ship fitter)
Boothbay Harbor, Maine

Your article on the pinup controversy prompts me to ask Robinson what gave her the desire to bite the hand that feeds her. In these days of high unemployment, surely there are plenty of qualified welders who would take her job regardless of decor and attitudes of co-workers. Robinson has ignored a major fact of life: Morality is an opinion, and everyone has a right to his own. The minute she decided her opinion took priority, she interfered with the rights of others. If those pinups bothered her that much, she should have chosen another place of employment. Why should the rest of us go out of our way to please her?

(Name withheld by request)
Las Vegas, Nevada

I've been thinking about your article "The Great Pinup Controversy." It is time that we men started working together to fight censorship and for *our* rights. Toward that end, I would like to know more about Article 19 and how I can join. I will be a lifetime reader of *Playboy*. Keep up the good work.

Chris Budberg
Westbank, British Columbia

*Article 19 is a human-rights group working to identify and oppose censorship worldwide. The group is based on Article 19 of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states, "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference, and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers." Membership applications are available through Article 19, International Centre on Censorship, 90 Borough High Street, London SE1 1LL, England.*

"Throw the switch and watch them twitch."
—COMMENT MADE BY DEMOCRATIC SENATOR DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN, RIDICULING A BILL MANDATING THE DEATH PENALTY FOR 51 FEDERAL CRIMES. THE BILL WAS LATER APPROVED BY THE SENATE.

To the Justices of the Supreme Court: I believe you have painfully disappointed millions of Americans who refuse to be inhibited by this culture's repressive responses to nudity, evident in your broad and reckless comments in the nude-dancing decision ("The War on Nudity, Part Two: The Supreme Court Considers the Art of Striptease," *The Playboy Forum*, July). Your words reflect the Victorian discomfort of those Americans programed for generations to identify parts of the whole person as forbidden. More importantly, your words contradict the ground swell of quietly changing attitudes toward the body. This evolution is difficult in a culture that teaches us not to like the body with which we were born. And American marketing's disproportionate focus on the "forbidden parts" only serves to further dehumanize the body as a whole. Your misguided insistence on pasties and G strings focuses more attention on that which is hidden, ignoring the multicultural, ethnic and religious taboos that would ultimately cover us from head to toe. In the future, avoid the controversy of which body parts are taboo by concentrating on the parts of the body that are really making the trouble: the mouths that tell the lies, the ears that will not hear the truth and the eyes that see only what they choose.

T. A. Wyner
Loxahatchee, Florida

*(An activist for nudist rights, Wyner was arrested for protesting at a Florida beach covered only with a copy of the Bill of Rights.)*

### SOUNDING THE ALARM

If the current conservative swing in Washington does not alarm you, it should. Doesn't it strike you as ironic that most of the issues rousing fundamentalist extremists are in some way related to sex? Where do they find the time to spend on it? Most of us have jobs to perform and children to raise (as it is, that doesn't leave a lot of time for sex). Our Presidents are elected on short-term issues, but our children will spend years suffering under the present Supreme Court. The

United States of America was not founded on politically correct principles. Let's honor our founding fathers by examining what we the people do to ourselves and leave as our legacy.

Friends of the Illuminati
Virginia Chapter
Charlottesville, Virginia

### THE FAR RIGHT

Using their habitually twisted logic, abortion protesters have hit a new low in the war on reproductive choice. The pro-lifers have decided that protests and public harassment are not enough—they are naming names. At a clinic outside Detroit, protesters carried signs bearing the names of two women scheduled to have abortions. A spokesman for the protesters said the tactic was their way of getting the women to "come and talk, so we can offer them help." If this is the far right's idea of compassion, we have really underestimated the extent of their insanity!

Bob Jones
Detroit, Michigan

*It comes as no surprise to us. Abortion opponents do not recognize the right of privacy or autonomy in its most basic form—the right of a woman to control her body. Why would they respect privacy in any of its other forms—in this case, the right to keep your most intimate medical details out of the public forum? The people who crusade for the sanctity of human life are blinded by their own beliefs and are unable to see the gross violations they inflict on women who are already faced with difficult decisions. For them to justify "outing" as a means of drawing these women into their ranks is ridiculous.*

### BLOCKBUSTER

I appreciated Kerry Simpson's letter ("Reader Response," *The Playboy Forum*, July) about Blockbuster Video's NC-17 policy. It's nice to know that I'm not the only one who's morally outraged by the consequences of Donald Wildmon's thought police. Just as Simpson did, anyone who's a member of Blockbuster should cut up his card and mail it to the company's headquarters along with a note saying why he is returning his card. Even if you're not a member, it would be a good idea for you to write to the company. If enough people do this, maybe Blockbuster will get the idea that its censormongering policies aren't as safe as it would like to think.

Allen Turner
Sacramento, California

## THE WAR ON NUDITY, CONTINUED

**By MARJORIE HEINS**

In the case of *Barnes vs. Glen Theater*, the Supreme Court has ruled that while nude dancing is protected by the First Amendment, states could demand that dancers wear pasties and G strings in the interest of "protecting order and morality." Chief Justice William Rehnquist, in his brief plurality opinion, did not address whether that interest would allow states to demand the same attire for productions of the opera *Salome* or the nudity often incorporated into stagings of Terrence McNally's *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*, or even Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Has the Supreme Court, then, fallen prey to artistic elitism? Will it give nude dancing, whose message the Court acknowledges to be "eroticism and sexuality," greater constitutional protection when done in the service of "serious" art than when offered as entertainment at Glen Theater's Kitty Kat Lounge?

Justice Byron White, in a dissenting opinion (and speaking for Justices Stevens, Blackmun and Marshall), thinks so. He wrote: "That the performances in the Kitty Kat Lounge may not be high art, to say the least, and may not appeal to the Court is hardly an excuse for distorting and ignoring" settled principles of constitutional law. Justice White reiterated an important First Amendment truism that because judgments about what makes good or bad art are highly subjective, constitutional protection of free speech cannot turn on evaluations of artistic quality. Particularly not when those judgments are made by Government officials—including judges.

White was right on the money when he pointed to the intellectual dishonesty and elitism of the Supreme Court's decision in this case. But I'm afraid he may have been overly optimistic in thinking that the decision's impact will be limited to "low" art. Last year's prosecution of Dennis Barrie for his exhibition of the jarring Robert Mapplethorpe photographs was a chilling reminder of the fragility of our constitutional rights to read, view and create as we please. If the public interest in "order and morality" justifies Government control of certain types of artistic expression, overly zealous public servants, like those in the Barrie case, are unlikely to confine their campaigns to simply censoring exotic dancing.

For example, as the director of the A.C.L.U.'s Arts Censorship Project, I've seen an alarming trend around the country to suppress simple nudity in art.

Last June, a public high school principal in New Britain, Connecticut, banned three nudes from a student art show. The works were tasteful rather than titillating; in other words, they were classic nudes and, as such, part of a long artistic tradition.

In January 1990, administrators of a Maryland state college took the same action in a campus art exhibition. Also in Maryland, organizers of a mall art show announced that nudes would not be considered for inclusion in the exhibit.

In the past two years, North Carolina municipalities have banned the production of *Oh! Calcutta!* and demanded the excision of nudity from the opening scene of a production of *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*.

These are not examples of obscenity or pornography. They are merely examples of the unclothed human body. It is unfortunate that this sort of puritan mentality is not limited to a few school administrators or local police chiefs but is becoming increasingly evident throughout the country. As the *Barnes* decision makes clear, the High Court (the usual last resort for decisions untainted by sectarian concerns) has become infected, as well. The noisy campaigns against "immorality" in the arts and entertainment by the likes of the Reverend Donald Wildmon and Senator Jesse Helms, as well as other lesser known crusaders, require continuing, vigorous and articulate response from everyone who believes in freedom of speech. This is especially true now, since the Supreme Court can no longer be counted on in this battle.

# NOW HEAR THIS

**we expected a cat fight, we got chaos and confusion. our man in new york tells what happens when feminists confront the oldest profession**

**By D. KEITH MANO**

In room 637 at the New York Hilton, ten or so prostitutes and porn-flick glitterati (Veronica Vera, Annie Sprinkle and Nina Hartley, among them) caucused with several women who write about sex to frame a draft resolution on pornography. This was Friday, July fifth, 1991. That morning, NOW—otherwise known as the Sisterhood of Enforced Political Correctness—had convened its national conference. This year's convention found hundreds of card-carrying feminists descending on Manhattan to hammer out the Agenda yet again. What took place in room 637, though less revolutionary than, say, gall-bladder removal through the navel, had considerable significance, nonetheless. As "sexworkers," the women of 637 felt they were due a legitimate and honorable lobby at NOW—one they'd never been granted. Not surprisingly, they felt that the NOW attitude toward porn was judgmental, archaic, vague and generally bad for business.

Miki Demarest, publisher of the San Francisco *Spectator*, is a particle accelerator, a plasma torch: More than anyone else, she has organized and stage-managed the movement to include sexuality in NOW, because she feels that the issue in general and porn in particular have been polarizing the organization. "It is inappropriate . . . to force people to deny their sexuality," said Demarest. "There were some really committed active lesbian feminists who were told they were not real feminists because they practiced S/M." They left and went to "groups that don't dictate morality to such an extent."

The fringe elements of the feminist movement—those overall-clad, bull-horn-toting storm sisters—have for years shouted their position: Porn demeans women and is a prime exciter of sexual violence in brutish men. But NOW has never formally articulated any such position on the national level. In fact, the issue of freedom of sexual expression has split NOW more efficiently than any other because it's *not* a First Amendment issue for the organization but an emotional one. The Mexican standoff on porn may be charted like so: Downtrodden women demand freedom of speech and sexual orientation, which implies freedom to create and read porn, which implies encouragement of a disdainful and dangerous male patriarchal atmosphere in the nation, which implies even more downtrodden women, which is a moral and intellectual Möbius' strip.

The 637 resolution didn't sound inflammatory: It wasn't "Sexworking women of the world, unite." It was as bland as your worst ulcer diet and went on and on about a "spirit of camaraderie, in recognition of a common patriarchal enemy." (Guess who that is, Mr. *Macho*.) It called—so what's new?—for extensive hearings and a National Task Force on Sexwork, which would supersede the current National Committee on Pornography—a useful deflection of emphasis from theory to practice. Most important, given the Pornography Victims Compensation Act before Congress in April 1991, it would require that NOW *not* endorse legislation or articulate a national position until some "cohesive" policy could be thought out. Nowhere did it allude to the highly problematic relationship between violence and porn.

A hearing on the 637 resolution was held late Friday afternoon before about 150 NOW members. It passed with max headroom. The next step would be a plenary session on Sunday. The sex activists were both jubilant and cautious. These are bright women who tend to be a bit, well, saucy. They relish confrontation. They aren't what you'd call reticent. To quote Nina Hartley, "What turns you on is what turns you on, and that's just the way it is. . . . You have a right to procure and produce images of whatever gets your nut off, whatever gives you a wet-on." These women enjoy their work: By God, it can even *empower* them. And they dismiss out of hand the feminist canard that many porn models are coerced à la poor Linda Lovelace.

By Saturday afternoon, though, reality had set in like month-old kreplach. Big Sister was watching again. In a scheduled 75-minute panel on porn and violence, social scientist Robert Brannon went from mere political cynicism to full-blown absurdity. After recounting one or two tendentious clinical studies, Brannon said, "The kind of man that might commit rape might very well be the kind that would enjoy violent pornography, but that doesn't mean that pornography had anything directly to do with his actions." Right on. But then, in an epiphany of demagogic enthusiasm, Brannon came out with this bogus datum: Evidence that porn and violence are related "looks stronger than the evidence that currently links cigarette smoking with lung cancer." Boo, hiss from his opposition. Embarrassment from his adherents. THE SURGEON GENERAL HAS DETERMINED THAT PORN MAY IMPAIR YOUR CIVILITY.

## THE 637 RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS controlling, criminalizing and stigmatizing women's sexuality and sexual practices historically have been powerful and profound tools for the oppression of women and sexual minorities and contradict the inherent human right of sexual self-determination; and WHEREAS, within NOW, there exist differing views regarding the definition of pornography, its impact on society and the validity of sexwork; and WHEREAS the current feminist debate on pornography has weakened the women's movement at a time when hard-fought gains for women are under attack as never before and, consequently, the need for a united women's movement has never been greater; and WHEREAS the voices of feminist sexworkers have not been previously recognized by the organized women's movement; WHEREAS feminists have a legitimate concern for the portrayals of women's diverse sexuality in** sexually explicit material, there being a compelling need for continued discussion and analysis that include the differing voices within the feminist community; and WHEREAS the current disparate positions of local NOW chapters regarding the appropriate response to controversial mass-media presentations using sexual imagery such as *American Psycho* and the conflicting positions on S983, the Pornography Victims Compensation Act, before Congress in [April] 1991 serve to weaken NOW due to the absence of a clear national policy; therefore, be it resolved that (1) NOW call on those feminists who differ on the issue of pornography to address one another in the spirit of camaraderie, in recognition of a common patriarchal enemy. (2) NOW conduct national hearings to analyze and construct a cohesive national policy to address women's sexuality, sexual practices, sexwork and the diverse feminist interpretations of the images of women in sexually explicit material, including pornography. (3) NOW shall not take public positions, take action or endorse legislation on these issues in the name of the organization until the aforementioned policy is adopted, because the issue is so controversial and pivotal for women's rights. (4) NOW and its subsidiary units are encouraged to continue to discuss and debate this issue. (5) A NOW National Task Force on Sexwork, to include issues of pornography, prostitution and sex therapy, be established, superseding the current National Committee on Pornography. The [Task Force] shall review existing NOW policy and make recommendations for a cohesive national policy.

Unless it's *erotica*, you understand. In 1978 or so, Gloria Steinem proposed this distinction: There is healthy sexuality (erotica, in which couples disport with New Age gender consciousness and mutual respect) and there is porn, an evil (in which women are hurt, spoken ill of or "objectified"). Brannon calls the latter "eroto-misogyny." But you'd need at least one full-time Jesuit casuist to sort out good and bad. Is the missionary position sexist? When might that tender hug become a restraint?

Late Saturday afternoon, to top off a scintillating day, I was handed the (unofficial) List of Lust for the Politically Correct—Progressive Pornography on Video. Yes, a roster of 62 raunch reels that will not offend your activist partner. Among these are *Suburban Dykes* and *Female Aggressors*, both obviously P.C.-rated—new and even more disheartening examples of safe sex.

All this goosestep conformism might just be laughable if it weren't so misleading and destructive. Truths are never politically correct. In fact, porn—rather than being an *agent provocateur* of violence against women—may well be their silent bodyguard. Empathize, if you will, with those men who are unattractive, poor, inept and not likely to win a sexual companion. Their fury, if harnessed, could light Seattle. I reckon this: Without the escape valve that porn and masturbation provide, many *more* thousands of women would be violated and brought to trauma. But Brannon et al. aren't testing for that variable, which might suppose an uncomfortable hypothesis: that porn could be beneficial to the culture in

general and to women in particular.

Porn, after all, isn't an artifact, book, video or performance. Porn is an instinct. It occurs normally in the mind (male and female). We visualize and project: We concoct a fictional account of our desire. This ineluctable genius for fantasy—and not much else—distinguishes human lust from the animal kind. The fact that fantasy may be written down or filmed is a mere matter of commercial convenience. Remember how Jesus put it: "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." He said that because he knew human nature—not because *Debbie Does Jerusalem* was playing at the Temple Quad.

By Sunday, it looked like a 50–50 proposition. "Pornography and Sexwork," the formal title of the room 637 resolution, was 22nd on a 53-resolution agenda: not *terrible* positioning—above "Impeach the Rehnquist Five" and *American Psycho*. But no one had counted on the exquisite incompetence of Patricia Ireland. This woman (who will be NOW president in December) couldn't act as chairperson for a monolog. By two P.M., *three* of 53 resolutions had been considered. My vision was glazing over, the way you stare at bathroom tile just before throwing up. *La nausée*, Sartre called it. "Pornography and Sexwork" never reached the floor. But it's on record now, and Miki Demarest, for one, won't quit. The next national conference may end with a bang, not a whimper. Which must be some sort of sexist remark. I think.

## NOW'S UNOFFICIAL LIST OF LUST

### porn for the politically correct

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Amaada by Night** | 1981 | Caballera |
| **Ball Game** | 1980 | Caballero |
| **Behiad Closed Doers** | 1990 | Vivid |
| **Betweea Lovers** | 1983 | Caballero |
| **Black en White** | 1972 | IVP or CVX |
| **Blue Magic** | 1981 | Video-X-Pix |
| **Bedy Talk** | 1983 | VCX |
| **Café Flesh** | 1982 | VCA |
| **Charli** | 1981 | VCX |
| **Cheeks 2: The Bitter End** | 1989 | Coast-to-Coast |
| **Christine's Secret** | 1985 | Femme |
| **Coming West** | 1972 | Class-X |
| **The Crack of Dawn** | 1991 | Trans-Global |
| **Debbie Duz Dishes** | 1986 | AVC |
| **Desires Within Yeung Girls** | 1977 | Caballera |
| **The Devil in Miss Jones** | 1972 | VCX |
| **The Devil in Miss Jones 2** | 1983 | VCA |
| **Deing It** | 1983 | Essex |
| **Eretic in Nature** | 1986 | Tigress |
| **Expectations** | 1978 | Essex |
| **Farewell, Scarlet** | 1979 | Command |
| **Female Aggressers** | 1986 | Catalina |
| **Female Athletes** | 1977 | Videa-X-Pix |
| **Femme** | 1984 | Femme |
| **The Filthy Rich** | 1981 | Caballero |
| **Firesterm** | 1984 | Command |
| **For the Love of Pleasure** | 1979 | Essex |
| **Hate to See You Ge** | 1991 | VCA |
| **High Society's Centerspread Videe, Number 7** | 1987 | High Society |
| **Het Dallas Nights** | 1982 | VCX |
| **Heuse of Dreams** | 1990 | Caballero |
| **Ia Love** | 1983 | VCA |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Interracial Sex: The Video** | 1987 | MFM |
| **Jack 'n' Jill** | 1979 | Video-X-Pix |
| **Jack 'n' Jill 2** | 1984 | VCA |
| **Let My Puppets Come** | 1983 | Caballero |
| **Let's Get Physical** | 1983 | Caballero |
| **Mitzi's Honer** | 1987 | Tamarack |
| **Nightdreams** | 1981 | Caballera |
| **Nina: Just for You** | 1989 | Bon Vue |
| **Nothiag te Hide** | 1981 | Cal Vista |
| **Over Forty** | 1989 | MFM |
| **Rear Action Girls II** | 1985 | Lipstik |
| **Rites of Passien** | 1987 | Femme |
| **The Scarlet Mistress** | 1990 | Vivid |
| **Sensual Escape** | 1988 | Femme |
| **The Seven Seductions of Madame Lau** | 1980 | Caballero |
| **Sex Games** | 1983 | Caballero |
| **Shades of Ecstasy** | 1983 | Hallywood |
| **Sometime Sweet Susan** | 1974 | Caballero |
| **Suburban Dykes** | 1991 | Fatale |
| **The Swap** | 1990 | Vivid |
| **Swedish Erotica Special Editiea: Nostalgia Blue** | 1982 | Caballero |
| **Swedish Eretica, Volume 55: Temple of Leve** | 1985 | Caballera |
| **Take Off** | 1978 | Video-X-Pix |
| **A Taste of Ambresia** | 1987 | Femme |
| **Three Daughters** | 1986 | Femme |
| **Trae Leve** | 1989 | Vivid |
| **Uniform Behaviour** | 1989 | Zane |
| **Urban Heat** | 1985 | Femme |
| **Wanda Whips Wall Street** | 1982 | Videa-X-Pix |
| **Wild Dallas Heaey** | 1983 | Caballera |

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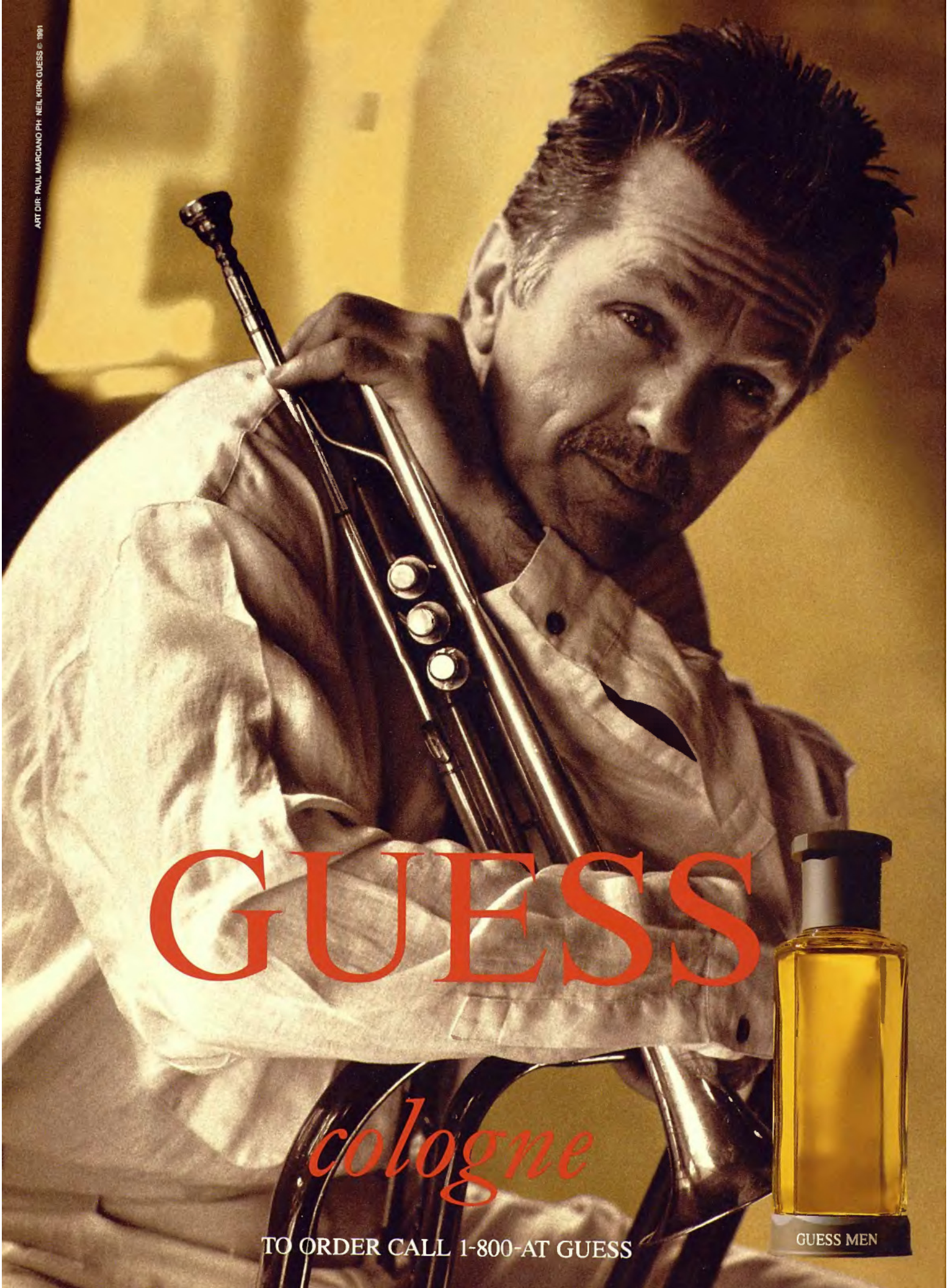
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# KILLER OF A DEBATE

*when it comes to abortion, conservatives lack the conviction to let the chips fall where they may*

opinion **By ROBERT SCHEER**

Why doesn't George Bush just come out and say that any woman or doctor who participates in an abortion ought to be convicted of murder? Anyone, rich or poor, in New York or Louisiana, using a public or private medical facility. That's the logic of Bush's turning the Supreme Court over to the pro-life crowd that says abortion is murder.

I hate the abortion debate, because the conservative politicians who exploit it will never follow through on their rhetoric. To do so would mean never winning another national election. It's just a vicious political game. The well-off will pay, here or abroad, for professional care to do what they want with their bodies, no matter what happens to *Roe vs. Wade*. Only the less advantaged will pay with trips to the local butchers or down the blood-stained Tijuana trail.

Enough with this noisy medieval quarrel about when life begins and who should make that judgment, an argument that has dominated American politics for the past decade. How long can we let arguments about the unborn drown out every other social concern, including the sort of medical, housing, educational and job opportunities that should be made available to the born?

Now, as the Supreme Court moves to abandon a woman's constitutional right to privacy and control of her own body, we may be at a moment of truth. The issue has been tossed back to Federal and state legislative bodies, which will attempt to wriggle free of their responsibility to take a stand. But it won't be easy, since there really is no compromise consensus position; you can be neither a little bit pregnant nor a little bit a murderer.

The stark choice now confronting elected political figures is to decide finally whether or not the hoary rhetoric of the anti-abortion crowd should be codified into law. If abortion is murder, it should be punished as such, and if it isn't, the state has no business telling a woman what to do with her body. Pretty obvious stuff, yet such clarity is hard to come by, because it does not serve the purposes of the politicians who have shamefully exploited the issue. I well remember conversations with conservative political advisors such as the late Bush campaign director Lee Atwater, Reagan pollster Richard Wirthlin and G.O.P. conservative guru Stuart K. Spencer, all of whom acknowledged that they just loved this issue as long as they didn't win on it.

It worked as a political ploy when it was just campaign rhetoric and not law. The abortion issue swung many traditional Catholic and fundamentalist-Christian working-class Democratic voters to the Republican Party during the Reagan years. The anti-abortion crowd was mollified and the Yuppies and anyone else who wanted an abortion still felt free to have one. If abortion should ever be banned, the party leaders recognized, the loss for the Republicans would be catastrophic. The trick was to keep the matter unresolved, but the success of the Republicans in packing the Court could threaten that strategy.

As long as the Supreme Court stuck with *Roe vs. Wade*, leaving the decision up to the woman as an essentially private matter, others were free to condemn that decision. But if the state intervenes and the power of the law is employed to punish abortion, then we must accept the judgment of some religious people that abortion is murder. And as a society, we are much too pluralistic and basically secular for that to stick.

Think of it. If abortion is murder, why are we pussyfooting around with George Bush's gag order on doctors in Government-supported clinics who are not allowed to mention abortion services to their patients? Why shouldn't private doctors in all states, not just in Louisiana, be jailed for conspiring with patients to break the law? What about the punishment of family members who conspire to buy a ticket to send a woman to one of the states where this murder is legal?

Are the anti-abortion people serious? If they are, how can they propose measures such as requiring parental approval for an abortion? Parental approval for murder? Or are we requiring the parent to be a co-conspirator? It's the same with the gag rule for physicians working in publicly funded clinics.

Murder is serious stuff. You can't allow rich people, or people in certain states, or those with private doctors, to get away with it while you punish the poor or those who happen to live in Louisiana.

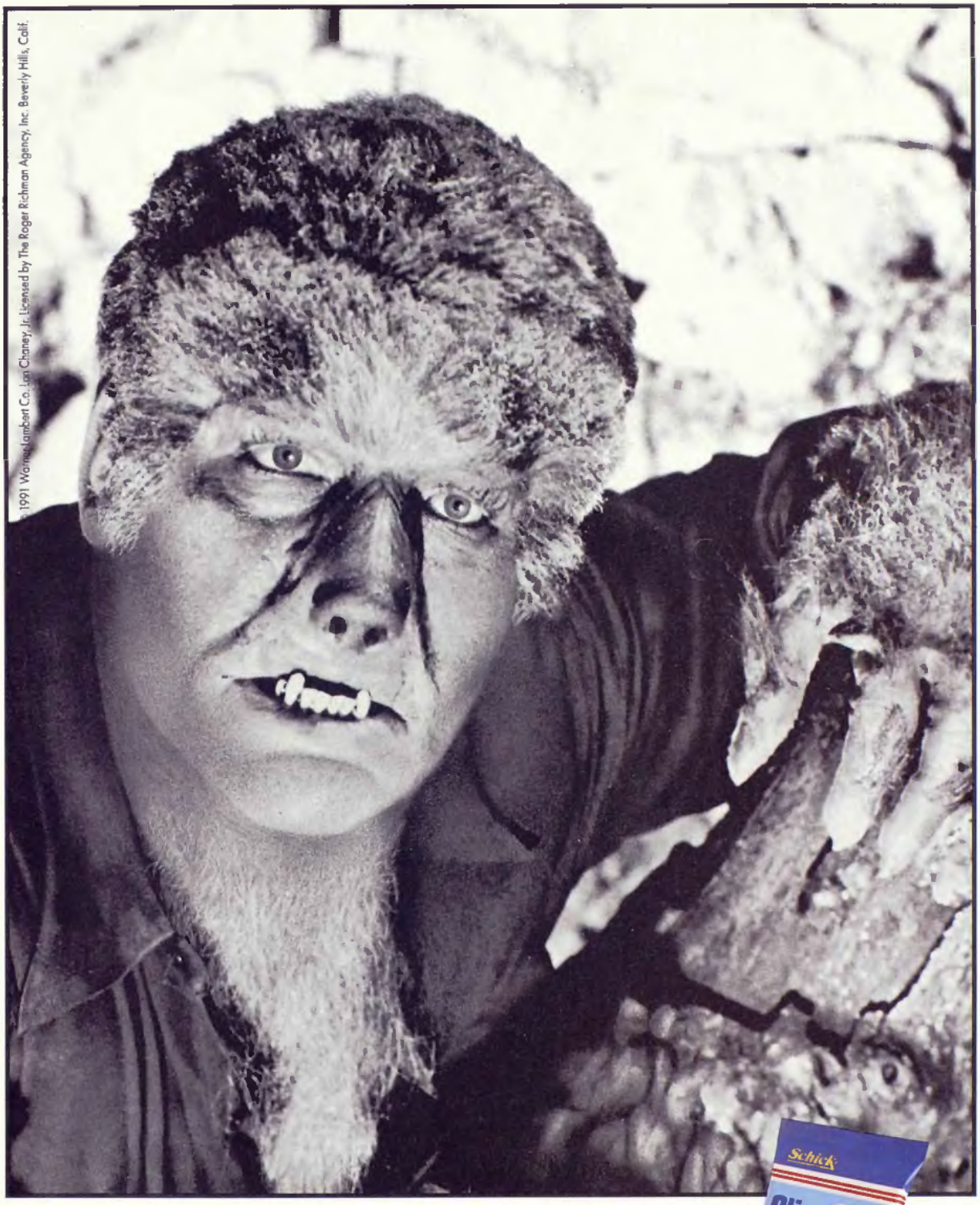
Connecticut law now affirms a woman's right to an abortion, while Louisiana denies it. Should U.S. citizens be permitted to travel from one state to another to commit legally condoned murder? And what about travel agents, family friends and others who conspire to help a woman commit murder by getting an abortion abroad? If the Supreme Court abandons the privacy standard, then we are in need of a well-defined and uniform Federal code on this question.

Let's get on with it. Since the Supreme Court will soon opt out, let's have the U.S. Congress vote yes or no on this abortion-as-murder issue and apply it to every state. At least then, the legislatures will be held accountable by everyone, rich or poor, North or South, and the accounting ultimately will be devastating for the prohibitionists.

There is a gentler, kinder way, but advancing it would require some political courage for conservatives. Go ahead and condemn abortion as immoral, unwise or just a lousy method of birth control. But leave the Government out of it, which shouldn't be such an odd notion for people calling themselves conservatives. Congress could remove Government from the equation by reaffirming a woman's right to privacy as a matter of Federal civil rights law.

The situation is getting critical. In Minnesota, for example, abortions are provided in only three of the state's 80 counties. Vast rural areas are now without abortion facilities and the number of doctors willing to offer the service to the poor has dramatically declined. What is happening is a return to the hypocrisy of the world as it existed before *Roe vs. Wade*, when the middle and upper classes could pay for safe procedures and the poor had coat hangers.

Rest assured that a future in which the anti-abortion forces have their way will not make abortion the same crime for everybody. The public won't stand for it. Instead, we will have a two-tiered justice system in which a Senator's wife or girlfriend will go to Sweden, New York or even—illicitly—the family doctor for the procedure, while poor women will be forced to fend for themselves. And the pro-life people will say that's life.

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# PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: SEAN PENN

## *a candid conversation with hollywood's bad-boy actor about his new career, his war with the press, his marriage to madonna and the mystical joys of surfing*

*Once, trying to get close enough to Sean Penn to take his picture—let alone talk about his private life—was typically met with epithets, spit and fists.* People *magazine diagnosed him as a "slugaholic" and paparazzi often goaded him into violence just to get one more action shot of Penn's knuckles heading straight at a camera lens. He snarled at reporters, threw punches at men who flirted with his then-wife Madonna, refused to do publicity for some of his films and became so immersed in a sea of bad press that it began to tarnish his obvious skills as an actor.*

*Approaching Penn today is significantly less hazardous. Now a wiser, more mature 31 years old, he has put aside acting in order to direct, and he has also adopted the more sedate lifestyle of a loving father. But don't suggest to Penn that his kinder, gentler incarnation means he's a changed man. "Changed from what?" he'll bark, a look of distaste covering his pugnacious face. "A generalized, categorized perception of my public persona? For those who have taken any interest?"*

*Despite his protests, people have been taking an interest in Penn from the very beginning of his career, and in the beginning, much of that attention was positive. From his first major role in "Taps," which co-starred Timothy Hutton and the unknown Tom Cruise, critics were enthralled. Many thought that Penn was the best actor of his generation, and some compared him to Robert De Niro. He followed "Taps" with his unforgettable performance as surfer Jeff Spicoli in "Fast Times at Ridgemont High," and he continued to etch memorable roles in the movies that followed—"Bad Boys," "The Falcon and the Snowman," "Colors," "Casualties of War" and "State of Grace." But he was bedeviled by two problems. First, his acting was usually better than the films themselves, which were often box-office duds. Second, his off-screen antics—which fell into three categories: fighting, drinking and dating—turned him into a press agent's nightmare. The media began to portray him as a typical show-business tragedy: the young, talented actor who drank too much, became distracted by his marriage to a bigger star and ultimately squandered his talent.*

*Penn, who seldom voluntarily cooperated with the press, seemed to go out of his way to fulfill that prophecy. His enemies were seemingly everywhere: The producers of "Racing with the Moon" publicly chastised him for not promoting the movie—and for persuading his co-star and girlfriend Elizabeth McGovern to do likewise. His outdoor wedding to Madonna remains unrivaled as a media circus—and Penn didn't do his image any good when he was rumored to have opened fire with a handgun at the newscopters hovering overhead. Their divorce was as attention-getting as the wedding; a SWAT team swarmed their house at Madonna's request and rumors abounded about bizarre and abusive behavior. The press kept regular tabs on his brawls—often an easy enough task, since the press was frequently on the receiving end—and Penn was a regular in court, explaining his problems with fighting and alcohol to various judges. Sometimes the explanations worked and sometimes they didn't—Penn ultimately served 32 days in Los Angeles County Jail for violating probation.*

*Lately, however, Penn's life has been much quieter. He managed to fall in love with actress Robin Wright, his co-star from "State of Grace," without landing on the cover of one magazine. The couple has a baby daughter, Dylan Frances Penn, and Sean has a new career behind the camera. His directing debut, "The Indian Runner," received favorable notices when it was shown at the Cannes Film Festival and will soon be released in the U.S.*

*Born on August 17, 1960—also the birthday of De Niro and Davy Crockett—Penn had*

*"You have to understand: When Madonna and I got together, she was an up-and-coming star. She was not an icon. My understanding of the direction Madonna was choosing was a misunderstanding. It was a big surprise."*

*"Unfortunately, 'Racing with the Moon' turned into one of the most boring melodramas of the Eighties: 'The Pugnacious Asshole Story,' starring Sean Penn. It was my biggest hit. It was all over the place."*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIZUNO

*"There were times somebody deserved to be smacked. And I have deserved to be smacked, too. No one ever wrote about the times when I got the shit kicked out of me, because nobody sues you when they kick the shit out of you."*

*his first exposure to show business around the dinner table. His father, Leo Penn, was a TV and film director, and his mother was actress Eileen Ryan, who retired when Sean was born. He grew up in L.A.'s suburban San Fernando Valley but moved to Malibu when he was ten, where surfing became his passion. Show business was everywhere: Martin Sheen and his family lived down the road—Emilio Estevez and Penn became buddies in their early teens—and he went to high school with another neighbor, Rob Lowe. It's no wonder that all three Penn children ended up in show business—Sean and younger brother Christopher as actors, older brother Michael as a singer/songwriter.*

*Although Sean and Christopher often fooled around with a Super-8 camera as kids, making home movies with a violence-and-action motif, Sean didn't seriously consider acting as a career until his senior year in high school. After graduation, he scrounged up some work with the Los Angeles Repertory Group Theater and studied with the late, legendary acting coach Peggy Feury. His first TV role was one line in an episode of "Barnaby Jones." More episodic TV followed, then Penn quit abruptly—typically, he complained that the commercials interrupted the flow of his work—and moved to New York to do stage work. A role in the play "Heartland" resulted in an audition for "Taps," and he was suddenly taken seriously.*

*When Penn agreed to a rare interview, we sent Contributing Editor* **David Rensin** *to meet with him as he put the finishing touches on "The Indian Runner." Rensin reports:*

*"I'd heard that Sean was supposedly a 'new man' and his willingness to sit for this interview seemed proof. But if he had undergone some radical personality change, it was not immediately apparent when we met at a friend's beach apartment. He greeted me coolly and carefully. There was no small talk, no attempt to create false intimacy. I quickly turned on the tape recorder and Sean sipped at a beer.*

*"At first, his responses were guarded and edgy. As time went on, during the first meeting and at four subsequent sessions at various locations, he opened up and displayed a sense of humor with wry, self-effacing asides. He seems comfortable with who he is, has a bracing if not entirely pleasing view of reality and is willing to roll with the changes—as long as he can do things pretty much his own way.*

*"I decided to begin our first session by asking about the most obvious manifestation of his new life—his daughter Dylan."*

---

**PLAYBOY:** Let's talk about fatherhood.

**PENN:** [*Beaming*] Isn't it a pisser?

**PLAYBOY:** How has your daughter changed your life?

**PENN:** Until my daughter was born, there was never anything more important than me in my life. She just came blasting in and said, "Hello. Now keep me alive. Make me happy. Educate me. And then let me go." All those prospects are a thrill. And you find out you don't want the night out so much.

**PLAYBOY:** Are you getting much sleep?

**PENN:** She sleeps pretty good. I'm told we're lucky. She's been nothing but a positive addition; it's not been an added burden or anything. [*Long pause*] Let me ask you something, because I'm curious. I'm not trying to be confrontational, but is there a preconceived sort of plan to break the ice through a personal thing like the kid?

**PLAYBOY:** Where do *you* suggest an interviewer start with you?

**PENN:** Well, you started with the inevitable common ground, right? [*Lights the first of many cigarettes and inhales deeply*]

**PLAYBOY:** We'll try something else. You just got back from showing your new film, *The Indian Runner*, at the Cannes Film Festival. You're known for shunning the limelight, so why even go to that media circus?

**PENN:** I hadn't ever been there with a movie. The press seemed much more respectful of the intentions behind making movies. I don't know if I was *liked*. I don't speak their language, but they didn't ask me stupid questions. I don't know what they wrote afterward. I was naïvely optimistic, and my expectations were exceeded.

*"I apologize to the people who know some of those people I hit—and that I didn't hit them harder."*

**PLAYBOY:** Did you run into your ex?

**PENN:** [*Chuckles*] Yeah. She's a hoot. She's very full of life. We ran into each other at a Spike Lee *Jungle Fever* party. She came over and sat down with me and some of the people I was with.

**PLAYBOY:** Any palpable tension?

**PENN:** Not to me. Maybe to others. It's a curiosity, I suppose.

**PLAYBOY:** Did you show her any of your baby pictures?

**PENN:** No, there are certain things you want to talk about only with friends.

**PLAYBOY:** Have you seen *Truth or Dare?*

**PENN:** She asked if I'd seen it and I told her no. I'm sure I'll catch it on cable.

**PLAYBOY:** Going to Cannes, a pleasant meeting with the ex. What we've heard must be true: You're a changed guy.

**PENN:** I assume that everyone on earth is in some kind of transition, so change from what? The simplified, homogenized, mass media–ized take on me? That persona is not something singlehandedly created by me. Most of it was created by people I've never met: so-called journalists. So to say yes answers something that never existed.

**PLAYBOY:** You mean you're just the same old Sean we've never really known?

**PENN:** I just feel a little defensive at the suggestion of change, because I sense the condescending attitude behind it. Plus, I don't believe I'm able to articulate any changes I might have gone through. So I would be setting myself up to give the inane answer: "I'm just not this terribly violent, awful little creep anymore. I'm now an enlightened individual who loves you all." It's not true. I don't love you all. Nor did I ever hate you all.

**PLAYBOY:** Does admitting to change seem like apologizing?

**PENN:** It *implies* an apology, and I don't have any to make.

**PLAYBOY:** Not even to people you hit?

**PENN:** I apologize to the people who know some of those people I hit—and that I didn't hit them harder. [*Smiles*]

**PLAYBOY:** Did you get any real satisfaction out of punching *paparazzi?*

**PENN:** Sometimes I did. Generally, when I've gotten into physical confrontations with people, I've felt terrible afterward. It's a stupid communication. It's not without its occasional value, and there were times when somebody deserved to be smacked. And I have deserved to be smacked, too. No one ever wrote about the times I got the shit kicked out of me, because nobody sues you when they kick the shit out of you.

**PLAYBOY:** Who kicked the shit out of you?

**PENN:** I was in a bar on an Indian reservation in Nevada. A guy came up to me and started talking. There'd been some press at that time about the leadership within the tribes' selling out their own tribes—making land deals with white man's corporations—so I asked him some questions about it. I guess he was the son of one of the tribal council. He shoved me, I picked up a chair and hit him with it. Then he and his buddies said, "You're wrong" in their own way.

**PLAYBOY:** He knew who you were?

**PENN:** Yeah, he knew who I was. He was looking for an opportunity, and I gave it to him. Now he can go back and say, "I kicked the shit out of Sean Penn." And I guess I was asking for it, because I'd had a few drinks.

**PLAYBOY:** We've heard about your drinking habits. In fact, in a recent interview, Madonna called you a "mean drunk."

**PENN:** That's what I get for calling her a hoot. Yeah, I drink. [*Pauses*] If I'm happy when I'm drinking, I'm a happy drunk. If I'm something else, I'm a something-else drunk. But my drinking now is *very* intermittent. I'll have a little something four days a week and once every two months, I'll binge. In the past, I binged for years.

**PLAYBOY:** What changed your habits?

**PENN:** Let me use an analogy. When I was in jail, one of the great ways to pass the time was to sleep, especially if you're a short-timer who knows he's going to get

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out on a specific date, when you won't have to pass the time with sleep.

I didn't have a calendar date when I'd be released from my [life] burdens, so to speak, but I knew *very* clearly that I would be released. That rests on my faith in myself, which I've always had. So I drank to shut out the noise that was going on in the meantime. Alcohol is a wonderful aid in that way. However, it's something to be careful of, because you don't want to combine it with certain "responsible tasks" that you have day to day. But drinking's not something I have to eliminate from my life in order to be responsible. When I drink, I choose my time carefully. I have always been able to put drinking aside to do whatever I had to do, no matter how excessively I was drinking at the time.

**PLAYBOY:** Did drinking add to your violent confrontations with the media?

**PENN:** Not much. But the courts thought so, and I was ordered to get help. The psychiatrist didn't think I had a problem in that area. If anything, alcohol slows you down.

**PLAYBOY:** In other words, you could have hit someone twice instead of once?

**PENN:** No, but maybe I would have been more aware of who was in what corner of what dark alley, about to pop out. I might have made another turn and never gotten into the conflict in the first place. Because I was drinking, I was less careful about what I did or said. But I still don't go for the cliché of "Sean Penn had his hot little acting career and then got crazy with alcohol and a turbulent marriage."

**PLAYBOY:** What's the most offensive thing the *paparazzi* ever did to you?

**PENN:** [*Grins*] They said, "We love you, Sean."

**PLAYBOY:** That provoked you?

**PENN:** A famous actress once used me as an example in an interview. I guess she was sympathetic to the problems caused by the *paparazzi*. She said if she were a guy, she wouldn't just hit [the photographer], she'd kill him. In effect, she was saying that she would go all the way. To me, going all the way means having no witnesses. I had my period of dealing with people the way I thought they should be dealt with, creeping and crawling in the night to get out what I felt—and I got away with it.

**PLAYBOY:** You skulked around at night and got revenge?

**PENN:** I knew I shouldn't have said anything.

**PLAYBOY:** But you said it.

**PENN:** Yeah. I exacted revenge. I don't want to advocate negative things. Yet I also don't apologize for revenge. It's a human reaction. And like I said, I don't have any regrets.

**PLAYBOY:** Give us an example of one of those midnight raids.

**PENN:** Actually, I'm concerned here. It's a funny area. In one sense, it's a silly little thing, and in another sense, the ramifications could be very serious. In either case, it's totally unromantic to put into words. And ultimately incriminating. So let's pass.

**PLAYBOY:** Why did you do it?

**PENN:** Justice. My own righteousness.

**PLAYBOY:** Was your sense of justice satisfied?

**PENN:** Yeah. Yeah.

**PLAYBOY:** How did your problems with the press get started?

**PENN:** It has to do with that marriage bringing me into some kind of perverse spotlight. I suppose that if her car had had a voice and a personality, they would have followed *it* and taken pictures of it in the garage.

It's all just another reflection of the mass insanity and mass sickness of celebrity and people's interest in it, their jealousy of it and envy of it. It's like a kind of disease. I don't have an entirely objective view of what that is, but I do have a pretty good visceral sense of the most well-known perception of me—that I'm an asshole. If I *am* an asshole, it's certainly not in the ways or for the reasons that people have come up with.

**PLAYBOY:** Let's talk about a couple of those reasons—some of the rumors that have surrounded you. Is it true that on the set of *At Close Range*, you beat up someone on the crew for flirting with your co-star, Mary Stuart Masterson?

**PENN:** That's totally untrue. That had to do with somebody who, just before we started shooting, was apparently drunk and intimidating the actress in the film. I had to have a conversation with him to make sure that we were all going to be able to work together without that kind of thing happening.

**PLAYBOY:** We've heard another story: You'd lost your driver's license and were riding a bus. Some guy was staring at you and he said, "Anybody ever tell you that you look like Sean Penn?" and you said, "Yeah." He said he had been an extra in a movie with Penn, and you said, "Oh, really? What did you think of him?" And he said, "Oh, he's a complete asshole."

**PENN:** [*Bemused*] I don't remember that. But I've had things like that happen. Once, I was on a public phone and somebody walked up to me and said, "Are you really as big an asshole as they say?" And I said, "Yeah." It's a longer conversation if you say no.

At the same time, there is an up side to all these misperceptions. By virtue of journalists' creating their own personality for Sean, my private life has taken great cover. Not only have I not vomited my real life into the public eye but it's been given a mask by people without my even asking. Even so, there's a hell of a lot more known about me than I would like to have known.

**PLAYBOY:** Yet you're here, talking.

**PENN:** You're asking me why am I doing this interview, and I suppose it's for the same reasons I *haven't* done other interviews: It seemed right. I'm just going by instinct. Also, I have a movie to promote, though it's never been proven that doing an interview will help. And, look, what's the worst thing that can happen? I've had hatchet pieces done on me. It's just words. And I can get over that.

**PLAYBOY:** You used to antagonize the press. One photographer, Mick Paladin, even challenged you to a three-round boxing match, just to prove that you weren't so tough.

**PENN:** Very funny story about that. After seeing this guy's ads in *Variety* challenging me, Marlon Brando sent me a note that said something to the effect of, "Dear Sean: Take the fight. Winner take all. HBO. If I were fifty pounds lighter, I'd get in there, too. Best, Marlon."

**PLAYBOY:** How do you respond to critics who have suggested that, like Brando, you had enormous potential as an actor but you squandered it at the feet of a driven woman?

**PENN:** Oh, they want to be my father? They want to be my dad? I'm the black-sheep son. I've got to tell you: I'm *so sorry*. I'm so apologetic. I really, really need to send them all faxes and apologize. [*Chuckles*] You know, John Lennon nailed it about having to live with this kind of shit: "People say I'm crazy doing what I'm doing."

**PLAYBOY:** One thing you did was spend thirty-two days in jail for assaulting a photographer. What did you do to pass the time, other than sleep?

**PENN:** I wrote like a motherfucker, but they won't give you anything but pencils. You can't use a pen, because it's against the rules to tattoo yourself. So I wrote a play that I later directed as a workshop thing called *The Kindness of Women*. And I wrote a movie, totally stream of consciousness, without stopping. I stayed up for three days. I never reread it. It was about the effects of boredom.

**PLAYBOY:** Did you read?

**PENN:** You could read what you took in. Since I surrendered instead of being taken off the street, I was able to take books with me: the essays of Montaigne; a William Burroughs book, which was too depressing to read under the circumstances; some Raymond Carver short stories that depressed the shit out of me; and a bunch of Thurber, which was great. Very light. I recommend Thurber for everybody in jail. I thought my books would last me the whole month, and they lasted two days.

**PLAYBOY:** Any interesting cellmates to talk with?

**PENN:** The "night stalker," Richard Ramirez, was in the cell across the way. Raymond Buckey [the defendant in the McMartin preschool molestation case] was in the cell next to me. This was not a fucking garden party. You're in an eight-and-a-half-foot-by-eleven-foot cell all by yourself. You *eat* in your cell. And in protective custody, on the short time, they do

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**PLAYBOY:** Did you talk to Ramirez or Buckey?

**PENN:** No. I talked to Buckey only once. When you're at visits or on the phone, you're handcuffed to a rail with one hand. Buckey and I were handcuffed by the phones and there was an emergency on the floor. These alarms went off while we were in the phone area, so they left one guard in the booth where he could see us. Buckey told me about his case.

Ramirez and I had to take showers at the same time a lot, because we were both high-priority inmates, because of our high profiles. There were threats on us both. Ramirez asked for my autograph once. I said, "I'll give you mine if you'll give me yours." Paper passing is contraband, so he asked a guard and the guard figured he wanted to be the cupid in the situation. Actually, this guard was a decent guy. He brought over Ramirez' autograph. It read, "Dear Sean: Stay tough and hit 'em again. Richard Ramirez, 666." It included a pentagram and a very good illustration of his view of the Devil. So I wrote him back something to the effect of, "Dear Richard: It's impossible to be incarcerated and not feel a certain kinship with your fellow inmates. Well, Richard, I've done the impossible. I feel absolutely no kinship with you." He got a kick out of it. He had a sense of humor.

**PLAYBOY:** Didn't people want to kill Buckey, since that was before the child-molestation charges were dropped? Wasn't he high priority?

**PENN:** Oh, yeah. But where he was, they had that kinship. They all knew each other. Of course, they all would whisper to you on the side, "This guy's really a psycho. I only chopped off my wife's head, but *this guy*. . . ." [*Laughs*]

**PLAYBOY:** Did you end up feeling sorry for any of them?

**PENN:** I'll tell you, there's nothing like being in jail and hearing the screams of somebody who's going to be in there for the rest of his life. At night, you're trying to sleep and you hear these fucking primal screams. When you think about what it's like being in jail, you think to yourself, These people don't deserve to be released, but *nobody* deserves this.

**PLAYBOY:** Was Ramirez a screamer?

**PENN:** Ramirez was odd. He was like a textbook psycho. He was funny. What he did was obviously horrible, but in jail, he was like the typical bad actor. He was like the psychos on *The Mod Squad*. He'd jerk off a lot when nurses were around. He'd start jerking off and laugh this manic laugh. Yeah, he was a big star there.

**PLAYBOY:** You must have felt terribly out of place in jail.

**PENN:** The whole idea that I was in jail was silly.

**PLAYBOY:** Why did you plead no contest instead of fighting?

**PENN:** I was on probation from an assault-and-battery charge. I had a suspended sentence, which means they own you; don't fuck up. One typical condition of probation is that you can't commit violence on anybody. Break no laws. But a further condition for me was "Commit no violence on *anybody*." I told my lawyers it seemed unconstitutional. They could have nailed me for *defending* myself. We were discussing that when I got into this stupid thing on Venice Beach with some guy, so now I had another charge. Which, on its own, I would have defended myself against and probably won. The press made it out to be a lot of shit, like I had attacked this extra. It wasn't the case. The guy spit on me, and it's a long story. While we were waiting for the hearing date, I was driving up from a friend's house in San Pedro, and I had done a bad thing—which was get in my car drunk. I saw the police and I hit the gas. I just wanted to get out of there. And they caught me. So I got arrested for drunk driving, and I deserved that. I


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think it's a terrible thing to do, and it wasn't the first time that I had done it. I knew it was stupid and reckless. I thought it would be wrong to fight it. It goes beyond self-destructive when you start including other people, potentially. So I went to the lawyers and we decided to approach the judge and make the best deal we could. That was sixty days, and a good day for a good day, and I did half of it.

**PLAYBOY:** Did you get any special treatment in jail?

**PENN:** The press was saying I got *sushi* dinners. Bullshit. In L.A. County Jail, they stick a finger up your ass and tell you, "OK, you don't have a gun." There isn't a sheet in the place that doesn't have shit stains on it. And then they tell me I was getting preferential treatment.

**PLAYBOY:** Didn't your media problems actually begin when you refused to do interviews for *Racing with the Moon*?

**PENN:** Bingo. I wouldn't play the game. I'd had no problems at all with the press up to that time. I was doing what I wanted to do; I was acting, trying to do the best job that I could. Then the time came to publicize the film. Great, I wanted people to see it. I'd worked hard. But I was busy in Mexico shooting another movie. There wasn't time to allow me to participate in the publicity for the film. But the people involved in that movie didn't respect my answer when I said no, and then they did something I don't believe has been done any other time. *They spoke in public against the actor who was in their movie.* They insinuated that I had influenced the other actors [not to do publicity], which was *totally* bogus.

**PLAYBOY:** Wasn't that because you and your co-star, Elizabeth McGovern, were an item at the time and she didn't do publicity either?

**PENN:** They assumed that because they're cowards and they didn't look at the truth. It was as if they realized that the wolves needed some food. So they said, "Here he is. His name is Sean Penn. Have a feast." You couldn't say the press started it. It was the people I was working for and/or with.

**PLAYBOY:** Would you have done publicity if you'd had time?

**PENN:** Frankly, I don't feel publicity is my responsibility as an actor. They don't ask me what I think about cutting the movie or the music. I've tended to help in the publicity when I've been included in the process beyond what I've been paid for. A good example is *At Close Range*, where the director, James Foley, and I worked closely together. When I'm paid to act, *that*'s what I'll do.

Unfortunately, *Racing with the Moon* turned into one of the most boring melodramas of the Eighties: *The Pugnacious Asshole Story*, starring Sean Penn. It was my biggest hit. It was all over the place.

**PLAYBOY:** Some people suggested that you didn't do interviews because your idol, Robert De Niro, didn't.

**PENN:** That's a good example of the bullshit the press comes up with. With all due respect to Robert De Niro, who I think is as fine an actor as there has ever been, I've never had an idol. Fuck, it'd be an embarrassing thought *even if I had felt it.* Never in my stupidest fucking moment would I have said that.

**PLAYBOY:** How did all this bad press affect your acting?

**PENN:** It didn't. I was always very conscious of the things that I needed to work on as an actor; where I was weaker and where I was stronger. That is not to say that it wasn't a contributing factor to some bad choices that put me in a situation—one situation in particular—where I just said, "I don't give a fuck." I just stayed drunk the whole fucking time.

**PLAYBOY:** Which movie?

**PENN:** I think *you* could probably tell *me.*

**PLAYBOY:** *Shanghai Surprise?*

**PENN:** [*Laughs*] You're a good guesser. I got myself into a situation with a bunch of cowards. We made a cowardly movie together. I was so pissed off and preoccupied with other things that it's the one time I took a movie entirely for the pay check. And also because there were people who wanted me to do it.

**PLAYBOY:** People such as Madonna?

**PENN:** Yeah. And they offered me a lot of


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money. I just said, "Fuck it, I'll do it."

**PLAYBOY:** Did you realize it was a self-destructive act when you did it?

**PENN:** Oh, yeah, yeah. But I didn't know quite *how* self-destructive. I didn't in my wildest imagination picture such a group of misfits aiding and abetting my self-destruction. I felt like the guy in the bar who picks a fight with the biggest fucking guy there because he knows all his buddies are going to back him, and it turns out all his buddies are blind and crippled. I didn't expect quite the beating I got. [*Laughs*]

**PLAYBOY:** Certainly, by that time in your career, you were wise to the way Hollywood works. *Shanghai Surprise* was a big studio production. Aren't big studios often to blame for bad movies, with their emphasis on marketing and budgets?

**PENN:** Not the studios. It's directors, writers and actors. I go to fewer and fewer movies that I give two shits about. Most are packages of negative spirit, designed to insulate those who have and pretend to offer something from those who don't. I'm interested in films only when the film maker's dreams are being shared with me, not when he or she is saying, "You don't have enough dreams yourself, so I'm going to make some up for you." When I walk into a theater, I'm just hoping, "Please, don't lie to me." The reason so many of these people don't look inside themselves and ask, What do I really want to say? is that they're cowards. Sure, there are people who have an interest in things that matter, but then they go into a meeting with a studio executive and apologize for what they're trying to do. If you start editing and modifying, which is what happens to most people, who the fuck wants to put up money to support that? I've been in so many of these meetings where the executives *have* some genuine interest in the project. Sometimes they're embattled themselves, but they *do* want to make good movies. Some of these guys *do get it*.

**PLAYBOY:** If passion were all it took. . . .

**PENN:** I'm not saying studios will do any movie you want just because you believe in it, but you haven't got a chance in hell to do *anything* worth while if you're showing your fear from the start.

There are film makers who made really wonderful movies early in their careers and then went straight to hell. But I'm not going to name anybody, because they know who they are. *Everybody* knows who they are. They're the ones who don't sleep well at night. *I* don't sleep well at night because they exist. So none of us are sleeping. [*Laughs*]

**PLAYBOY:** Who *is* committed?

**PENN:** Terry Gilliam. His films have been good and bad—but they're always his fucking dream, because nobody else has dreams like that. This guy should be funded by the Government. They should just give him whatever he spends every year and let him make his movies. And it's not even my kind of movie. But you know that this guy is sharing something sort of magical, and that's great.

**PLAYBOY:** What about those film makers who don't have a dream to share?

**PENN:** They should do my laundry—it's backing up. [*Smiles*] Most of these actors should find out what it is that they really take pride in. It certainly isn't acting.

**PLAYBOY:** Now that you're talking about quitting acting, perhaps you'd care to characterize your career.

**PENN:** Well, at the risk of sounding falsely humble, I think I did pretty insignificantly and made it more insignificant by ending up so overburdened with [unpopularity]. That affects the perception of a performance.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you disavow your acting?

**PENN:** I respect acting as a craft. But for me, the craft eventually became a set of addict's works, like a hypodermic needle. If I didn't act, I could feel it physically, like I was gonna have a withdrawal. So I acted. And, like a lot of addicts feel about the drug, acting became my lover and I thought of it in very positive terms. But when it didn't love me back, it started hurting me. It showed its true face and I realized it wasn't what I was built for.

**PLAYBOY:** Were you surprised to learn how good you were as an actor?

**PENN:** I was perceived as good by some and not by others.

**PLAYBOY:** But generally——

**PENN:** Hey, I'm not going to accuse myself of being a good actor in public.

**PLAYBOY:** You can't deny you stood out from the crowd.

**PENN:** There were only a few other young actors at that time doing anything that made any sense. As time went on, there were fewer and fewer. Now I think ninety-nine percent of the young actors coming up should *really* do my laundry. [*Smiles*] They should have a wing of the Screen Actor's Guild, the Acting Police, to take care of these people. So I wasn't surprised that I achieved some degree of success. If I made an impression, it wasn't against incredible odds.

**PLAYBOY:** You started out in *Taps*, with Tim Hutton and Tom Cruise. What did you think was going to happen to the three of you? Do you respect these men as actors?

**PENN:** Yeah. *Taps* started a whole generation of youth movies. Tim Hutton had just done *Ordinary People*, and he opened the door for young actors. He'd won an Academy Award. It was easy to perceive him as a real talented actor. My expectation is that he'll go on doing good work and continue to be a movie star. Tom Cruise surprised me a lot. Not so much that he became a big star—because I think he's done some very good work—and not because I didn't think he was gifted; but he seemed so naïve at the time that I worried if he was going to get lost on his way home. I can't say I'd have called his future correctly.

**PLAYBOY:** You've always refused to talk about your preparation for a role. Why?

**PENN:** You turn on the television, which is a sin to do in the first place, and all you see is these behind-the-scenes things now, on every cable station. This is the last fucking thing in the world that they should do to the movies. The *last fucking thing*. People can't enjoy the experience of the movies as much as they used to. They enjoy talking about special effects and how things were done. It just drives me nuts. And the worst part of all, of course, is the actors who talk about how they created their roles. They go on and on and on about this and that bullshit. That better be one great fucking performance if it's so worth talking about. *And it never is*.

**PLAYBOY:** At what point did you realize you wanted to stop acting?

**PENN:** When I realized it hurt too much. I was doing *Hurlyburly*, a wonderfully written play by David Rabe. The part was fascinating. Yet every night, it hurt. So I asked myself, What the fuck am I doing?

**PLAYBOY:** Yet you still did more movies.

**PENN:** Yeah. I had already committed to do another movie. I decided that would be the last time I'd act. It was *We're No Angels*. But I had a very difficult time there, through nobody's fault but my own. I was left with that petty feeling of wanting to finish with a better experience. So *State of Grace* was offered and it was interesting. I worked with a director, Phil Joanou, who was at the beginning of his career. He has an excessive amount of enthusiasm about film and a lot of knowledge about it in areas that I was not as knowledgeable about. It was a treat for me, because I knew I was going to direct and there were a lot of things about directing that I learned working with him. He clearly should *not* be doing my laundry.

**PLAYBOY:** Now you've become a director. How did *The Indian Runner* evolve?

**PENN:** Before Springsteen's *Nebraska* came out, I heard his song *Highway Patrolman* on a demo that a friend had, and I knew Bruce remotely. Later, I happened to be around when he was on the phone with somebody, and I got on to tell him that I'd responded very strongly to that record and, in particular, that song. I offhandedly said I'd like to make a movie of it someday, and he offhandedly said OK. At that time, I was thinking more as an actor. I just kept thinking about it over the years and started to get one picture after another in my head. When I was up in Vancouver making *We're No Angels*, I started passing the time between shots at the typewriter and just wrote it.

**PLAYBOY:** Is this your first screenplay?

**PENN:** [*Laughs*] No. I've got a shelf full of them.

**PLAYBOY:** Some people call *The Indian Runner* a meditation on the problems of contemporary masculinity.

**PENN:** As the director and writer, I think

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# For the man who's good at making a woman feel great.

Pierre Cardin

For you to enjoy, for her to remember.

most people would expect me to be the expert here. Unfortunately, I don't feel that my thoughts on what the movie is about are any more informed than those of somebody who goes to see it. So I don't want to get into it. I'm not doing a Bob Dylan on you—I'd love to have him explain a few things about his songs to me—but I'd really prefer that the thing spoke for itself when it comes to that sort of question.

**PLAYBOY:** Is *The Indian Runner* a coming-of-age story?

**PENN:** Not in the traditional sense of coming-of-age stories, as the term is applied at development meetings in Los Angeles, California. That's a first-fuck issue. I think there's yet to be a truly significant coming-of-age film. They're either too soft because adults are dealing with their own vision of how they'd like to see children, or they're clichés. And I understand that. It would be very difficult to make a film about the coming of age.

**PLAYBOY:** The reviews from Cannes for *The Indian Runner* were generally good, but reviews don't pay the bills. How important is it for your debut effort to make money?

**PENN:** Frankly, I haven't really thought about making money with this movie, except in the most superficial sense. You do your work and you hope to be able to continue to do your work. Monetary success is not absolutely necessary to keep on directing. I think you have to be responsible to the *idea* as you expressed it to those who have to worry about the money. You go in and you tell a story, and it affects someone or it doesn't. And if it *does* affect them, and they decide they want to put up the money for it, the rest is their problem, financially. Your problem is to be responsible to tell the story that they paid for. Also, I'm not worried about being able to get money together. I'm a scrapper. I'll come up with it. I'll sell lemonade on Santa Monica Boulevard to make the movies. I'll steal it. As a celebrity, you get invited to Hollywood parties, and who the hell is going to suspect you of taking the jewels? And there are lots of handbags.

**PLAYBOY:** If you won an Oscar, would you accept it?

**PENN:** [*Laughs*] What the fuck is that all about? Have you seen that program lately? It's a ship of fools. I just don't get it. I don't get that nobody sees how fucking venal it is.

**PLAYBOY:** Suppose the film is a success and the press starts to like you. Can you handle it?

**PENN:** No! Please don't like me. The positive stuff is just as damaging as the negative and just as untrue. A good rule is that if too many people like you, you're doing something wrong. Very fucking wrong. If there's not somebody out to get you, you ain't shit.

**PLAYBOY:** You said before that one reason the press focused on you was your marriage to Madonna. Let's talk about that.

**PENN:** Let's don't. [*Laughs*]

**PLAYBOY:** There was a lot of ink about your wedding. Anything you'd like to set straight about that circus?

**PENN:** The thing I'd like to correct is the perception that the whole thing *was* a circus and a fiasco. In fact, only the ceremony outside was a fiasco, because little punky news jerks got up in a helicopter to be Peeping Toms and ruin things. But once it got under the tent, it was just fine.

**PLAYBOY:** Didn't you later tell one newsman, "I wish your helicopter had crashed and burned"?

**PENN:** It will one day.

**PLAYBOY:** Let's clear something up: Were you actually shooting at the helicopters? Didn't a friend have to disarm you?

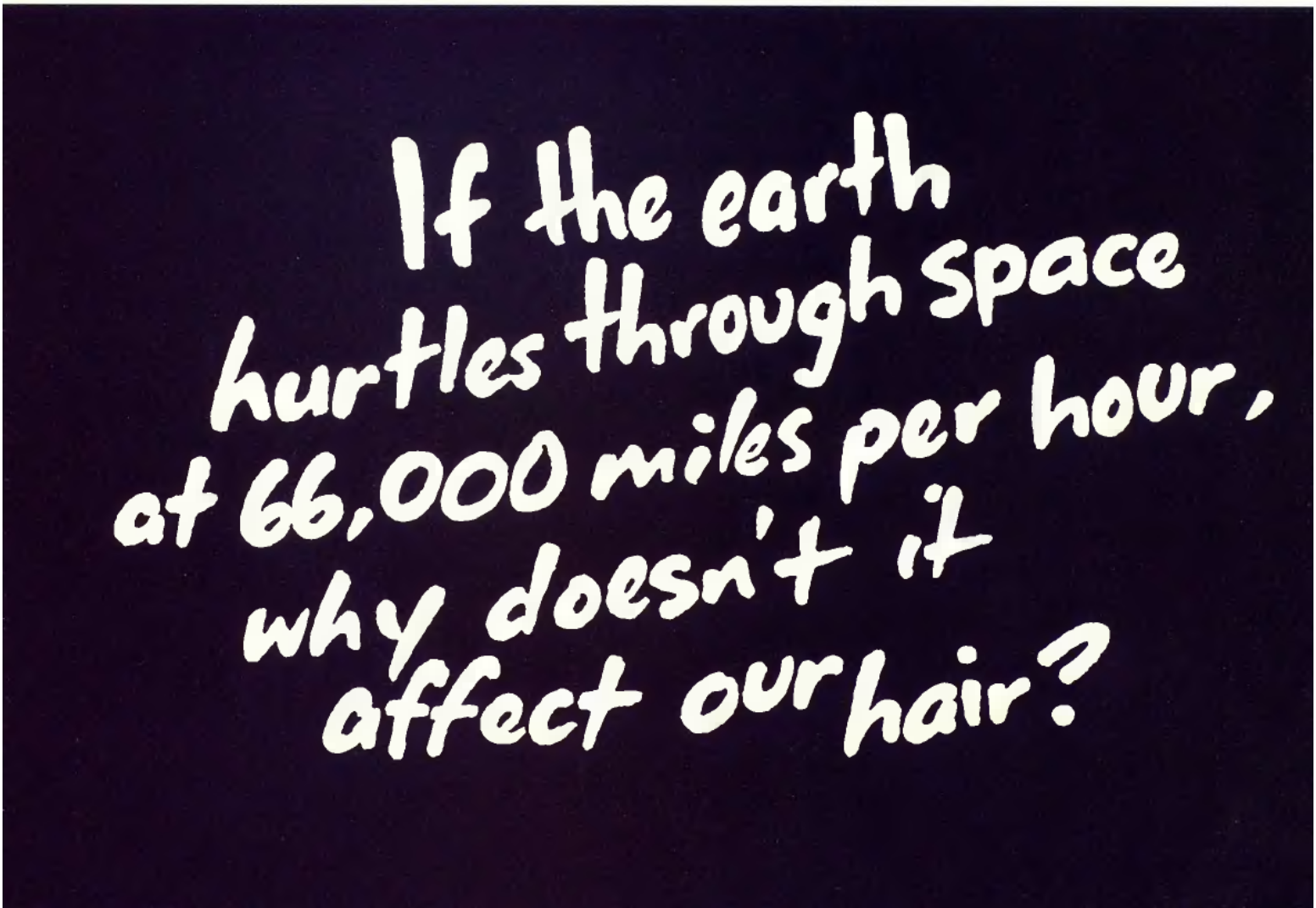
**PENN:** Nobody had to take the gun away.

**PLAYBOY:** What does that mean?

**PENN:** [*Chuckles*] I don't remember—on the grounds that it may incriminate me. [*Pauses*] I've been misquoted before in an interview, where someone reported that I said, "I like to drink and I like to brawl." That came back to haunt me in a deposition. The other guy's lawyer was using it. So, did I shoot at the helicopters? I, uh, I don't know.

**PLAYBOY:** But there's a big smile on your face.

**PENN:** Well, so you'll write that down. Fair



enough? Let me put it this way: I have never shot a firearm at anything I considered to be a human life form.

**PLAYBOY:** Can you describe the hell of the Madonna era?

**PENN:** Hell is your word.

**PLAYBOY:** What's your word?

**PENN:** Period of insufficient peace. It was very uncomfortable for me to be in a situation where there was so much [public] attention on nothing.

**PLAYBOY:** But considering Madonna's high profile, as well as your own earlier reputation, that couldn't have been a big surprise to you.

**PENN:** You have to understand: When Madonna and I got together, she was an up-and-coming star. She was not a superstar; she was not an icon. She hadn't even gone on tour yet. And that tour, before we got married, didn't indicate to me the enormity of what was coming. But soon she became public property, and her husband-to-be was treated likewise. I knew a lot of people who were bigger stars who had much more peaceful lives. My understanding of the direction that Madonna was choosing was a misunderstanding. And the degree to which she would be choosing, and chosen for, such an intense spotlight was not something that I had seen in the cards. So that *was* a surprise. It was a *big* surprise.

**PLAYBOY:** When did the truth hit you?

**PENN:** I started to get the idea very shortly after we were together, but by then, there's that heart thing that gets involved. You don't walk away so easily just because something is a little difficult. And you don't know how long certain things are going to last. That might have passed.

**PLAYBOY:** You mean she could have been a flash in the pan?

**PENN:** Or it could have just neutralized itself. There's a very big difference between her and just about anybody else you can name. I don't think anyone else is carrying around that sort of Beatles- or Elvis Presley–size persona, saturating the world. Sure, that was a surprise.

**PLAYBOY:** How did you feel about seeing your wife nude in this magazine?

**PENN:** Well, at the time, she was very upset about it. I don't believe it should be legal to publish photographs of people without their approval. If they sign a release, that's another story. I don't know what Madonna did. I just know that the person I cared a lot about in my life at the time was very upset by the whole thing, so I wasn't pleased. But as far as the reaction of a husband seeing his wife's naked pictures published, I didn't care about that.

**PLAYBOY:** It seems that when those pictures were published, she was a lot more private. Since then, she has really exposed herself in all sorts of ways.

**PENN:** [*Chuckles*] I think she's much more liberated now, doing the things that she likes to do. She's probably a much happier person.

**PLAYBOY:** Ultimately, why did the marriage crumble?

**PENN:** I can just say it ended. It didn't end without both of us, to the best of our abilities, giving it a scout's try to make it work out. It just didn't work out. I guess we got to a point where we felt comfortable enough with the idea of not being together to split.

**PLAYBOY:** That seems anticlimactic for such a great romance.

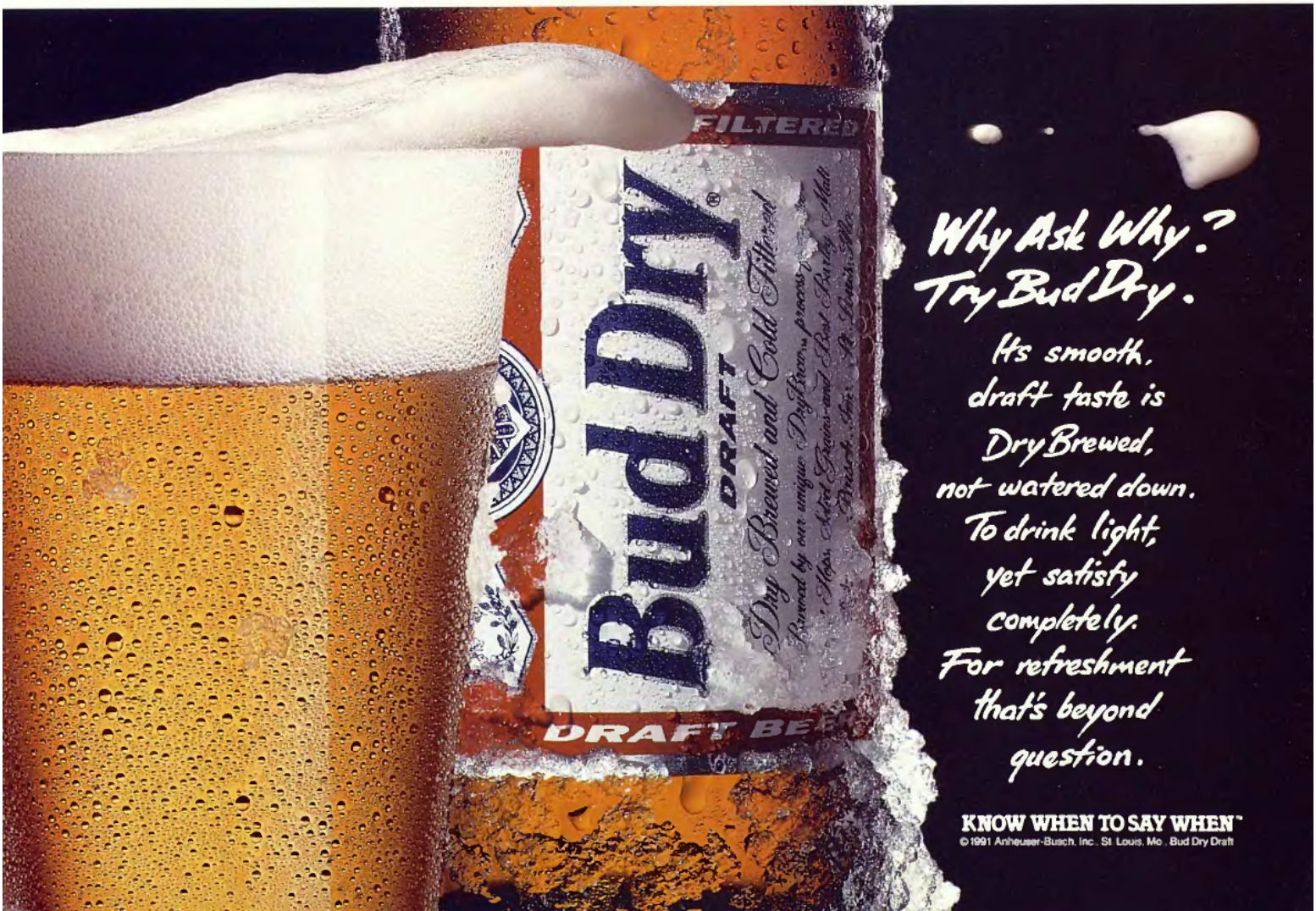
**PENN:** In our eyes, it was just like any other romance. Apart from all the fanfare that existed in the relationship, we didn't have a single tiny little problem that hasn't been experienced by millions and millions of people over and over again.

**PLAYBOY:** But you aren't like millions of other people.

**PENN:** *I* was. I won't answer for her, but, *yes, I was*. Yes, I *am*. That's all there is to it.

**PLAYBOY:** Were there any hints at the beginning that things might go sour?

**PENN:** Here's one thing that happened. She had a soap-opera law firm that, from the beginning, was very concerned about her being married in the state of California. However, I on no day on this earth am going to sign a prenuptial agreement, which I equate with a death warrant on a marriage. Nor am I, under the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worst circumstances, going to take a penny of somebody else's change. Those pressures came at the beginning, and they came like gangbusters at the end. This bunch of pathetic little doggy-poos were, in effect, accusing me of being some kind of a mooch. They found out otherwise.

**PLAYBOY:** You could have asked for half of Madonna's fortune.

**PENN:** I could have gone any way I wanted. There's community property in California. There were reports in the press that I somehow extracted the house in Malibu. Check the public record: The *only* things that we owned together were the two houses. She took one, I took the other. Those were the only things that we both put up cash for; everything else was separate and stayed separate. The reason I bring this up is that those kinds of influences became part of my *daily life*, because she had become a one-person megacompany, and all those people were on the telephone with her every day.

**PLAYBOY:** What you're saying is that even before you two got married, her handlers had big plans and they wanted——

**PENN:** To make sure I wasn't looking for cash.

**PLAYBOY:** That seems odd. Weren't you the bigger star at the time?

**PENN:** Maybe for the first minute we were together. But that changed very quickly.

**PLAYBOY:** Did she want you to sign the prenuptial?

**PENN:** I don't want to get into what she wanted specifically. I'll just say that it was a bother.

**PLAYBOY:** Wasn't your drinking another problem?

**PENN:** [*Chuckles*] Really? Where did you hear that? We could come down to specifics on these things and they wouldn't answer it any better, because who's to say why any marriage doesn't work, finally?

**PLAYBOY:** Do you think you two ever had a chance?

**PENN:** No wa-ay. Under the circumstances of what happened with her? No way. But I wasn't conscious of it going in. Ultimately, we had different value systems.

**PLAYBOY:** One thing that seems clear from Madonna's latest round of interviews is that she's very down on men. For instance, she was quoted in *Newsweek* as saying, "Straight men need to be emasculated. I'm sorry. They all need to be slapped around. Every straight guy should have a man's tongue in his mouth at least once."

**PENN:** [*Laughs*]

**PLAYBOY:** Is that the Madonna you know?

**PENN:** It's her wit, yeah.

**PLAYBOY:** Is that wit or what she believes?

**PENN:** Look, I'm not any better an expert on her than anybody else. I don't know her any better from having been with her. I was drunk most of the time, anyway. But whatever anybody thinks about what she does, she serves as a brilliant reflection of what people respond to and what they want to see—*on every level*. In very complex ways and in very superficial ways. I find her statements like that pretty amusing.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you like Madonna, after all is said and done?

**PENN:** Yeah. I just don't want her living at my house.

**PLAYBOY:** When she did, did she do your laundry?

**PENN:** Absolutely. [*Laughs*]

**PLAYBOY:** We have to ask this, so help us out: What about the biggest rumor, that Sean-Penn–tied-up-Madonna-for-nine-hours thing?

**PENN:** Don't forget the rest of it: And dressed her up like a turkey. After I read that stuff, I thought long and hard about what one would do to dress someone up like a turkey. And I nailed it. I figured you've got to get out the Playtex glove, blow it up and put the glove over the head. [*Laughs*]

**PLAYBOY:** Is any of it true?

**PENN:** I was looking at locations in Vancouver when I read about it. At that point it was . . . a welcome fantasy. It was also a great disappointment to some of my more perverse acquaintances to tell them that it hadn't occurred.

**PLAYBOY:** So you never tied her up?

**PENN:** My biggest question is, Why didn't anybody ever ask *her* that? She can tell them that I didn't.

**PLAYBOY:** What *did* occur on that last day?

**PENN:** A SWAT team surrounded my house and came in every door. But it happened because on the day that we split up, she developed a concern that if she were to return to the house, she would get a very severe haircut.

**PLAYBOY:** You mean haircut of head hair?

**PENN:** I think that's what she thought. So she took this concern to the local authorities, who came back up to the house. She felt the responsible thing to do would be to inform them—since they were coming up there ostensibly to keep her from getting a haircut and to let her gather some additional personal effects—that there were firearms in the house.

**PLAYBOY:** True?

**PENN:** Uh, yes.

**PLAYBOY:** What were you doing when the cops arrived?

**PENN:** Eating cereal.

**PLAYBOY:** Did they slap you against the wall?

**PENN:** No, they did what they had to do pretty decently, considering that they thought they were coming in to a volatile situation with firearms.

**PLAYBOY:** What about the charges Madonna supposedly filed and then withdrew?

**PENN:** [*Quickly*] She *never* filed any charges at all. They didn't need a search warrant to come in, because she was a co-owner of the house. Go down to the D.A.'s office or call them up. There's no charges. I was never arrested.

**PLAYBOY:** Did you introduce her to Warren Beatty?

**PENN:** Yeah.

**PLAYBOY:** How did that happen?

**PENN:** "Warren, this is Madonna. Madonna, this is Warren." [*Laughs*]

**PLAYBOY:** Were you surprised that she took up with Warren after you broke up?

**PENN:** I was amazed to see such cleanly poetic justice occur. I couldn't have imagined a bolder cliché.

**PLAYBOY:** Now you're leading a new life, living with Robin Wright and your daughter. Why is it working this time?

**PENN:** We tend to speak the same language. Robin is a deeply caring person who spends very little time obsessing about her own crosses to bear.

**PLAYBOY:** What do you know about relationships now that you didn't know when you were with Madonna?

**PENN:** I don't function on a check list as much as I used to. By the time I met Robin, my list of expectations had been put in the shredder.

**PLAYBOY:** What are you looking for?

**PENN:** I wouldn't be in the relationship I'm in now if Robin weren't challenging and didn't have a more heightened awareness in certain areas than I have. And I hope I give the same back. Those qualities have always been attractive with any of the relationships I've been in. I wouldn't have had a child with Robin if I hadn't thought that her resources as a human being weren't limitless. Not only for myself, because only God knows if a relationship lasts forever or not, but for the child's sake.

**PLAYBOY:** You and Robin have yet to marry. Did you plan this child?

**PENN:** I couldn't say that. [*Smiles*] Let's call it a happy accident.

**PLAYBOY:** What is your role in child care? What's your philosophy?

**PENN:** Wipe a lot of tushy, do a lot of burping. And when I look into her eyes, I try not to be a liar.

**PLAYBOY:** You were there for the birth?

**PENN:** Yeah. Cut the cord and everything. We had a Caesarean. I watched the surgeon put his arm halfway up inside her torso, through this hole in her gut. She looked up at me and said, "Did they cut yet?" I said, "*Oh, yeah*, they cut."

**PLAYBOY:** After the divorce and before meeting Robin, were you dating a lot?

**PENN:** I dated, but with only the most lascivious intentions. It took me a while to sort out what had happened before getting into something new.

**PLAYBOY:** You must have been considered a fairly eligible bachelor.

**PENN:** I've gotta be way, way, way down toward the bottom of the list of studs who ever drove down Sunset Boulevard.

**PLAYBOY:** Couldn't you get chicks just because you were a movie star?

**PENN:** Well, I might have gotten chicks, but I might have also said, "Geez, sorry: drank too much." I've used that excuse a

few times. If I ain't comfortable with somebody, the plumbing ain't gonna work. Ultimately, love is more important than anything. Love is the only interesting thing. Love and compassion. Compassion. Even saying the word makes me feel good things. I grew up in a household very full of compassion. I'm not saying that it wasn't a judgmental household in some ways, but there was some kind of overwhelming bottom line, overwhelming compassion, in my parents.

**PLAYBOY:** Let's talk a bit about growing up. What are the significant moments of your childhood?

**PENN:** I grew up all over the San Fernando Valley, but when I was ten, I moved to the beach. I lived for seven years at Point Dume. I spent most of my childhood surfing. So, yeah, there are waves that I'll never forget. Surfing was purer then. People talk about how bad the Seventies were musically and culturally; but surfing is the one thing that was at its height in the Seventies. I define surfing, then, as an art form. It was truly about matching the energy of the wave. It was a harmony and there was poetry to it. There was a spiritual aspect to surfing then. Now it's just a sport.

**PLAYBOY:** What happened?

**PENN:** The Seventies were to surfing what rehearsals are to a play. Sometimes you get magic in a rehearsal because it's new. And in the Seventies, short boards were new. It was that transition period and surfing was never better. It was so fluid. Now it's so aggressive, and it really represents our times. It's like a mirror. Surfing is an angry sport. They're ripping these beautiful waves to shreds. There was a time when the wave and the surfer were intact and it was magic.

**PLAYBOY:** Why did you leave the water?

**PENN:** Hey, don't depress me. I don't want to think that I have left the water. Not a day has gone by when I haven't said, "Gotta get back in the water." I keep thinking that maybe tomorrow I'll have the time to get out there and do that. If I were to suggest what to put on my tombstone, it would probably be SEAN PENN, SURFER, DIED whenever I do.

**PLAYBOY:** What was your school experience like?

**PENN:** I had a terrible school experience. I regret having gone to school. I think I missed a lot of opportunities to see life during that period. I cannot resolve that issue, and I have to start thinking more about it because of just having had a child whose time will come for education. But I can think of very few positive things about school.

**PLAYBOY:** Right from the beginning?

**PENN:** From the beginning. It was a thirteen-year sentence. It was hell. Boring. Oh, painfully boring. Nothing that interested me, aside from a history class in junior high school. I had a history teacher who understood what it was to talk about life, a guy named Leonard


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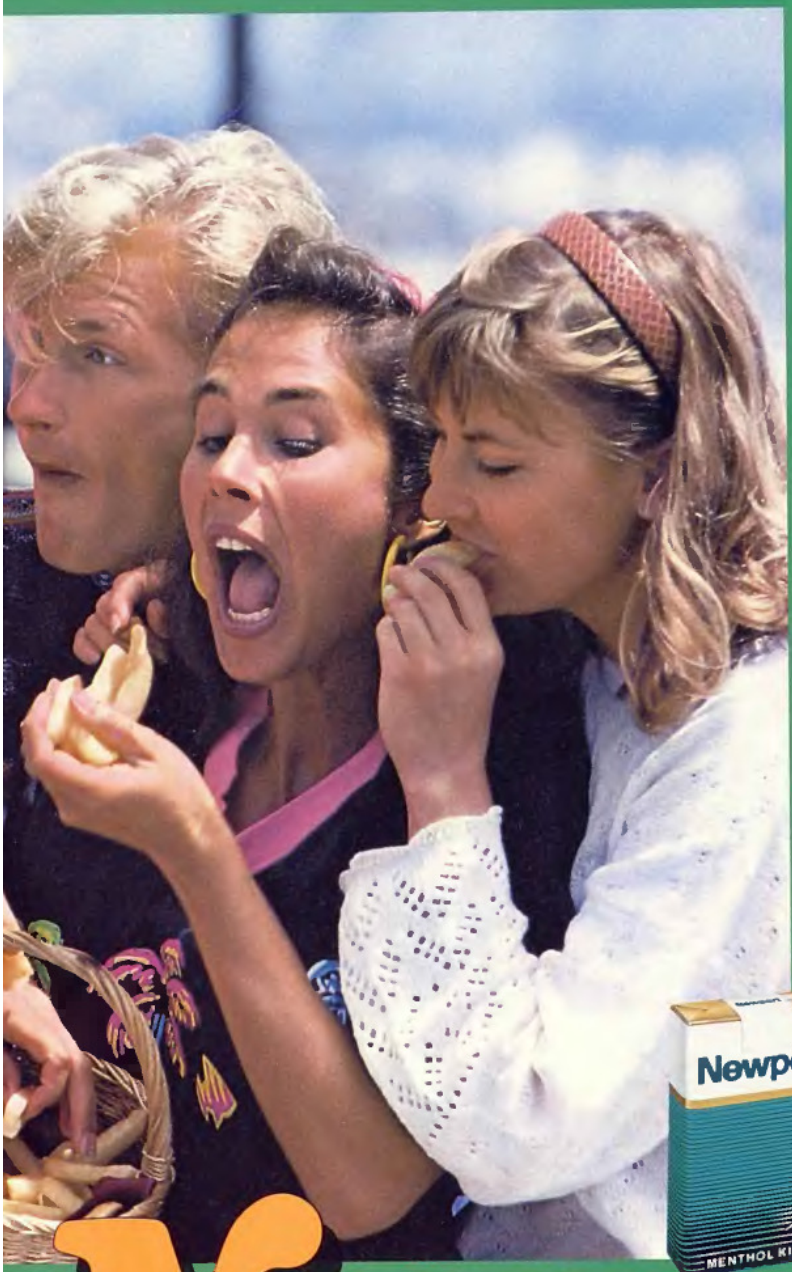

# Newport

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Vincent. He was a brilliant teacher. So if I got one thing out of school, it was running into him. But aside from that, I can't think of one positive fucking thing. There wasn't one book I read I wouldn't have read on my own.

**PLAYBOY:** At least you learned how to read.

**PENN:** Schools sure don't teach you how to read—look at the illiteracy rate. My mother taught me how to read.

**PLAYBOY:** What kind of trouble did you get into at school?

**PENN:** I wouldn't call myself a delinquent student. I basically mastered the ditch. Actually, I was pretty invisible most of the time. I passed those hours and worked very hard at not doing my homework.

**PLAYBOY:** What did you want to be when you grew up?

**PENN:** In elementary school, I wanted to be a geologist, which to me at the time meant rock hunting. In junior high school, I wanted to surf. That's the beginning and end of that story. And in high school, I decided that the most interesting person around was F. Lee Bailey. I read *The Defense Never Rests* and his other book, and I decided that I was going to continue Darrow's line. And that lasted until my senior year, when I realized that my grades were not good enough to go to the law school of choice. Besides, I'd had it with school altogether. If I couldn't just go out and practice law, I would go out and be an actor.

**PLAYBOY:** You've had a lot of friends, it seems, who are older men—Dennis Hopper, Charles Bukowski. And you dedicate *The Indian Runner* to the late Hal Ashby and the late John Cassavetes. What contributions have these men made to your life? Were they mentors?

**PENN:** You could construe some of those men as mentors—inadvertently. In fact, they are just friends of mine from whom I've gotten a lot of inspiration and to whom I hope I've given some back. They are friendships where wisdom lies a little heavier in their hands than in mine. But it's not something I want to analyze. It makes their friendship into a commodity, and I don't want to treat it that way in public.

**PLAYBOY:** Will you explain why you dedicated your film to Ashby and Cassavetes?

**PENN:** Those two guys, probably more than anybody else, made films that, to me, were provocative, personal, emotional expressions. They made films in a more open way than many of the other people I respect. John wrote most of the films that he directed. Hal Ashby's camera never announced itself. Hal Ashby never announced himself. They made the kind of movies I am the audience for. I like anybody whose work represents who he is. Cassavetes was somebody you couldn't have an uninteresting conversation with. Same thing about Hal Ashby. And there wasn't anything, with either one of them, in which they didn't find an incredible degree of humor. And that's reflected in their movies.

**PLAYBOY:** What situations in your life reflect that kind of humor?

**PENN:** SWAT teams surrounding my house because they're afraid I'm going to cut somebody's hair off. I've got to tell you: The timing was amazing. Hal lived nearby, and he'd often come up and we'd play pool together. Later that afternoon, I was at a memorial for his passing. The only thing I could think of was how hard he'd have laughed.

**PLAYBOY:** Did you go to them for words of wisdom?

**PENN:** I hate words of wisdom. It's like people say to me, "Oh, it's so good for you that you're directing now." How the fuck do you know what's good for me? You don't even know me. Maybe it's good now, maybe it won't be later. Ashby and Cassavetes never said bullshit like that. However, I did ask Chris Walken something once, when life seemed like such a roller coaster. I said, "You're a bit older than me. Does it always stay such a roller coaster?" And he said, "It stays a roller coaster. You just learn to enjoy the ride." So I suppose if you want to quantify my relationships with older men, it's that I like being around people who are enjoying the ride, however treacherous it might be. I have an easier time in the company of people who are a part of life, willing to risk life and are comfortable rolling with the punches. And that's the first time I've really thought about that.

*"In elementary school, I wanted to be a geologist, which to me at the time meant rock hunting. In junior high school, I wanted to surf."*

**PLAYBOY:** Do you enjoy the company of men more than women?

**PENN:** I find hanging out with the guys to be a meditation. I hang out with guys who are very comfortable not looking at me and not having me look back at them. Talking and not caring if I'm listening. Not listening when I'm talking. Take all the conversation and it adds up to zilch. You experience each other that way. It's inadvertent, not organized. It's just there. It's like being by yourself without being by yourself. When you're a well-known person, it's easier if you've got a couple of people around just because you're in conversation. And being with people I know already enables me to just be there, see the world a little bit and not hide away in my house—which is what I would do otherwise.

The older you get, the more you start to realize when you're wasting your time. Everybody sits around on Friday night thinking, Oh, God, I've got to go out there and do this and that—and there's nobody out there. There isn't anything out there.

**PLAYBOY:** What about women?

**PENN:** Well, there's that thing you can do with women that you can't do with men. There's a couple of things, there's *a lot* of things! [*Laughs*] But there aren't a lot of women who are comfortable when you pay them no attention.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you believe in God?

**PENN:** Well, you know, there's a quote at the end of *The Indian Runner*: "Every child born comes with a message that God is not yet discouraged of man." The only thing that bothers me about that quote is the presence of the word God. I wouldn't say that I *don't* believe in God, but I don't believe in a Christian God, and I don't believe in a Jewish God. We won't talk about the ayatollah's God, because I don't want to have to wear a blond wig and get tit implants and hide in Mexico.

**PLAYBOY:** OK. Let's end where we began: Are you the same guy you used to be?

**PENN:** It's said that every seven years, you've got a whole new set of cells in your body. And you've got a whole new set of experiences. So I still don't think it would be accurate to say *I've* turned my life around. I think that lives float on the ocean. The swells come up and you go through lulls, and there's storms.

I don't know what tomorrow's going to bring, and I don't look at yesterday as tragic. I've never had any kind of spiritual or physical rehabilitation, and I'm not sure that I've ever been dehabilitated in the first place. I would just say that in life, as in surfing, you take off on a big wave over a shallow reef, and you find out if you're capable of making the turn before you hit the reef. You might take off out of that peak a few times and get bashed into that reef a few times, and then at a certain point you say to yourself, Do I just need more practice on this reef or is this reef bigger than I am? Should I just move over to the shoulder a little bit? So you move over to the shoulder and you're doing just fine there, and all of a sudden, the bottom changes and you've got a new reef under you. Can you make that one or not? I don't know.

**PLAYBOY:** But you do move over to the shoulder now and again.

**PENN:** I move over to the shoulder now and again. But sometimes I move to the far side of the reef just to see if I can go right on through it.

**PLAYBOY:** Is this, then, Sean Penn's spiritual foundation?

**PENN:** Can I repeat myself repeating John Lennon? "I don't believe in Beatles; I just believe in me."

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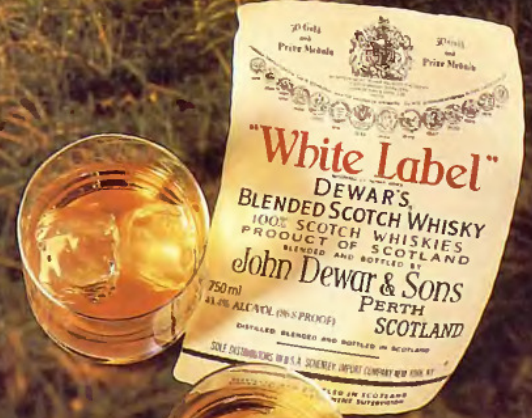
On a summer evening in Scotland you can play golf 'til well past ten.

But please be advised, your round must come to a halt while the groundskeepers take their dinner break.

Taste the true flavor of Scotland, Dewar's "White Label."




# DEWAR'S SCOTLAND

# BOTTOMS UP

tuesday through saturday, from nine P.M. to five A.M., my two blonde neighbors stripped to their smiles at a cruddy joint just off the expressway

FICTION BY MARSHALL BOSWELL

FOR A BRIEF PERIOD—sometime between graduate school and the rest of my life—I lived next door to two strippers. Which wasn't what they told me at first.

"Cocktail waitresses," said one.

"An unbelievable drag," said the other. "You have no idea."

I met them outside my apartment about a week or two after I moved in: a pair of rent-sharing women in their mid-20s, both blonde but otherwise incongruous.

"I'm sure it's not so bad," I told them, as if I knew what I was talking about.

"Trust us," they said in unison, and fell to giggling.

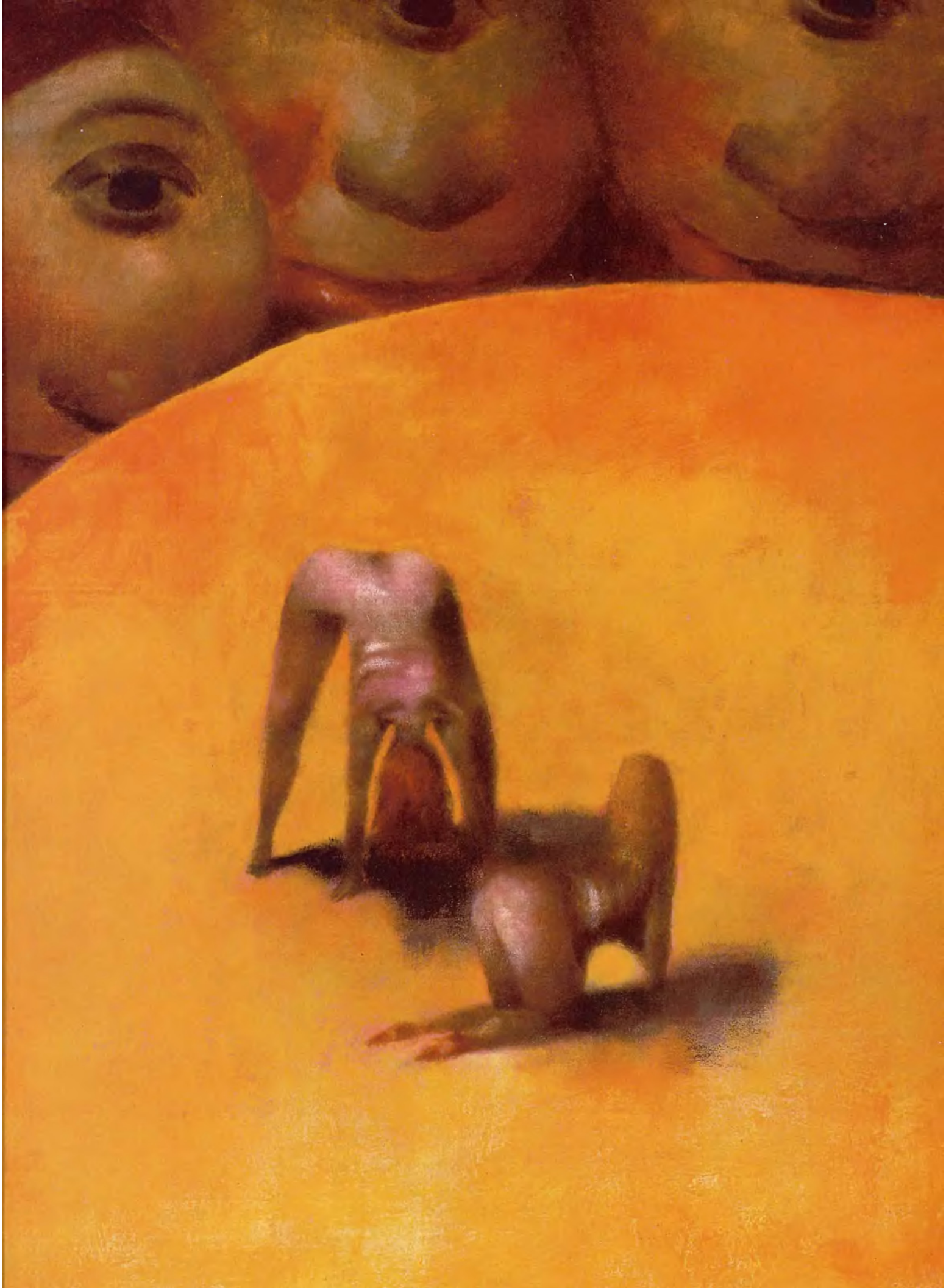
Rachel and Lesley. *Cocktail waitresses.* If you think about it, they weren't actually lying all that much. Cock. Tail. Tips. The tools of their trade.

"So where is this place?" I asked, being neighborly. "What's it called?"

"Oh, you don't want to come in *there*," Lesley assured me.

Lesley was the bigger of the two. Much bigger, actually. I admit that she

ILLUSTRATION BY BRAD HOLLAND



terrified me, towering there in the grass behind my apartment. The sunlight gave her bleached hair a slick, lemony sheen. Easily 5'9", 5'10", she was an enormous girl, not fat so much as husky, her ample hips and thighs rippling as if an undulating current had been frozen underneath the skin. If women are ever admitted into the N.F.L., Lesley will make a terrific linebacker. Nevertheless, she possessed a curious masculine appeal—that and an absolutely stupendous set of tits. Truly first rate. In due course, I was to learn she had a little boy named Bruno, who, at the ripe age of three, was understandably unaware what a disaster he had for a mommy, though I think he suspected something. Rachel, on the other hand, struck me as both harmless and alluring, in a crisp teenage way. Her hair, in contrast to Lesley's, was naturally blonde, cropped at the neck and moussed into a gummy spike at her forehead. She looked like a hot high school number, cozy and suburban in cutoff jeans, bikini top and unbuttoned oxford shirt. Her fingers were jammed into the pockets of her shorts and she rocked back and forth on her stiff legs. I have no doubt Rachel went through a horse stage; I'm willing to bet her sport in middle school was gymnastics; she was the product of a quarter century's intake of diet soda and peanut butter. She was conventionally pretty, her pleasant face marred only by a slight Germanic underbite.

"No, really," I persisted. "I'd love to go. I'm new in town and I don't know anybody." In fact, I'd been desperate for a reason to get out of my apartment and this seemed as good a way as any.

Rachel smiled at Lesley, as if waiting further instruction: Clearly, old Lez here was the leader.

"It's a strip bar," Lesley told me. "We're cocktail waitresses at a strip bar—nothing but creeps and low-life scum. Spics everywhere, them your basic greaseball jerks. Save yourself the trouble." She'd pegged me already. I was a safe bet. *No way*, she'd told herself, *is this guy the strip-bar type. Too timid. Too provincial.*

The lady had a point. I'm *not* the strip-bar type. Then again, she was a pathological liar. The facts went as follows: Tuesday through Saturday, from nine P.M. to five A.M.—like nocturnal secretaries—Rachel and Lesley stripped to their smiles at a place called Bottoms Up, located in southwest Homestead right off the expressway. Basically, the place was a box and a parking lot; it had a lone front door and gratuitous cast-iron bars across its bricked-in windows. A bad place, to be sure, redolent with bad karma. Absurdly, it was sandwiched between Blockbuster Video and a Wal-Mart shopping plaza.

The sign out front guaranteed those brave enough to enter an ALL-NUDE REVUE. As if to underscore the sincerity of such a pledge, three silhouetted NUDES performed a Dionysian jig inside a martini glass. In addition, POOL and DARTS were offered as alternative attractions in the event one grew bored (but how?) with the ALL-NUDE REVUE. I confess to being stirred the first time I saw Bottoms Up. I passed it every day to and from work, and as I am—sociologically, at least—white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant, I experience a WASPish thrill whenever I am confronted with a remnant, however insignificant, of Gomorrah. Those cast-iron windows haunted my imagination; that sign tickled the underside of my prick. What went on in there? I wanted to know. Were the women really naked? Did they let you touch them? What were they thinking as their tits swayed brazenly under the lights? (I was imagining all this, you understand.) These thoughts, and others like them, coursed through my brain twice a day, five days a week.

And so I was more than a bit surprised when, one night on my way home from work, I espied my two lovely neighbors dashing across the street en route to the forbidden lair.

Wow, I thought, what a coincidence! Imagine running into them down here! They were dressed casually—shorts, T-shirts, Tretorns—and under their arms, they carried overnight bags. For all the world, they looked as if they'd just returned from the mall. I honked as I sped past, but without so much as glancing my way, Lesley raised her arm and flipped me the bird. Just like that. At first I was unnerved, but then I quickly realized that to her, I was just another honker, simply one of an entire race of automotive rodents that no doubt riddled her otherwise placid existence.

I looked into my rearview mirror and caught a last glimpse of them as they kissed the bouncer by the door and sauntered inside Bottoms Up, bags slinging. Cock and tail. Brick windows. POOL and DARTS. My mind raced and I put two and two together. Holy shit.

•

Two nights after I'd found them out, Rachel and Lesley asked me to help them move a couch into their apartment. It was a Sunday night, hot and muggy in that broad, persistent way of Florida summers. There was beer. We made a party of it.

"How's work?" I asked, not without some satisfaction. I imagined this was how parents felt when confronted with a child's subterfuge.

"Man, I've gotta get out of that place," Rachel said, handing me a Budweiser. "No shit, I'm serious."

"Oh, pipe down," Lesley called from the kitchen. "You're not going anywhere, kiddo."

Rachel rolled her eyes.

We were sitting on the new couch, a lush blue sofa sleeper that Lesley and I had somehow hoisted from the bed of her pickup, dragging it grunting and cursing down the hall and squeezing it through the deceptively narrow front door of their apartment. I was ashamed to realize that Lesley had frankly outmuscled me. Twice I'd dropped my end. *Twice.*

"Why do you want to quit?" I asked, delivering the line as if I'd read it somewhere. "Aren't you making enough?"

"Oh, I'm making plenty," she said, curling her shorts-clad leg into her chest. A smooth slope of underthigh widened into a buttock and then disappeared into the couch. "It's not that. It's the people. Weirdos like you wouldn't believe. Just sitting and staring. Get a life, you know? And they don't stare at your—um, at the dancer's face, or even her boobs. They stare somewhere else."

"No kidding?" I asked, sincerely curious. "Where do they stare?"

Rachel looked at me coyly, fluttering her lashes. The gesture seemed to say, *Take a guess* or, perhaps, *Wouldn't you like to know?* I wasn't sure. What I did notice was the slight smile tugging at her lips as she followed my gaze: For the past two minutes, I had been openly gazing between her legs.

"They stare at the *pussy*," Lesley announced, entering the room with two beers dangling from a six-pack ringer. Evidently, they were both for her. She plopped down and fixed her gaze on me. "Innat what you'd look at, Davey boy? The old pussy?"

Silence. Invisibly, the air conditioner hummed. "Maybe," I said.

"Don't you know?" she asked, popping open one of her Buds. "Or should I show you where the thing is located?"

"Oh," I said, forcing a smile, "I have a pretty good idea."

In a manner of speaking, I was getting my ass kicked.

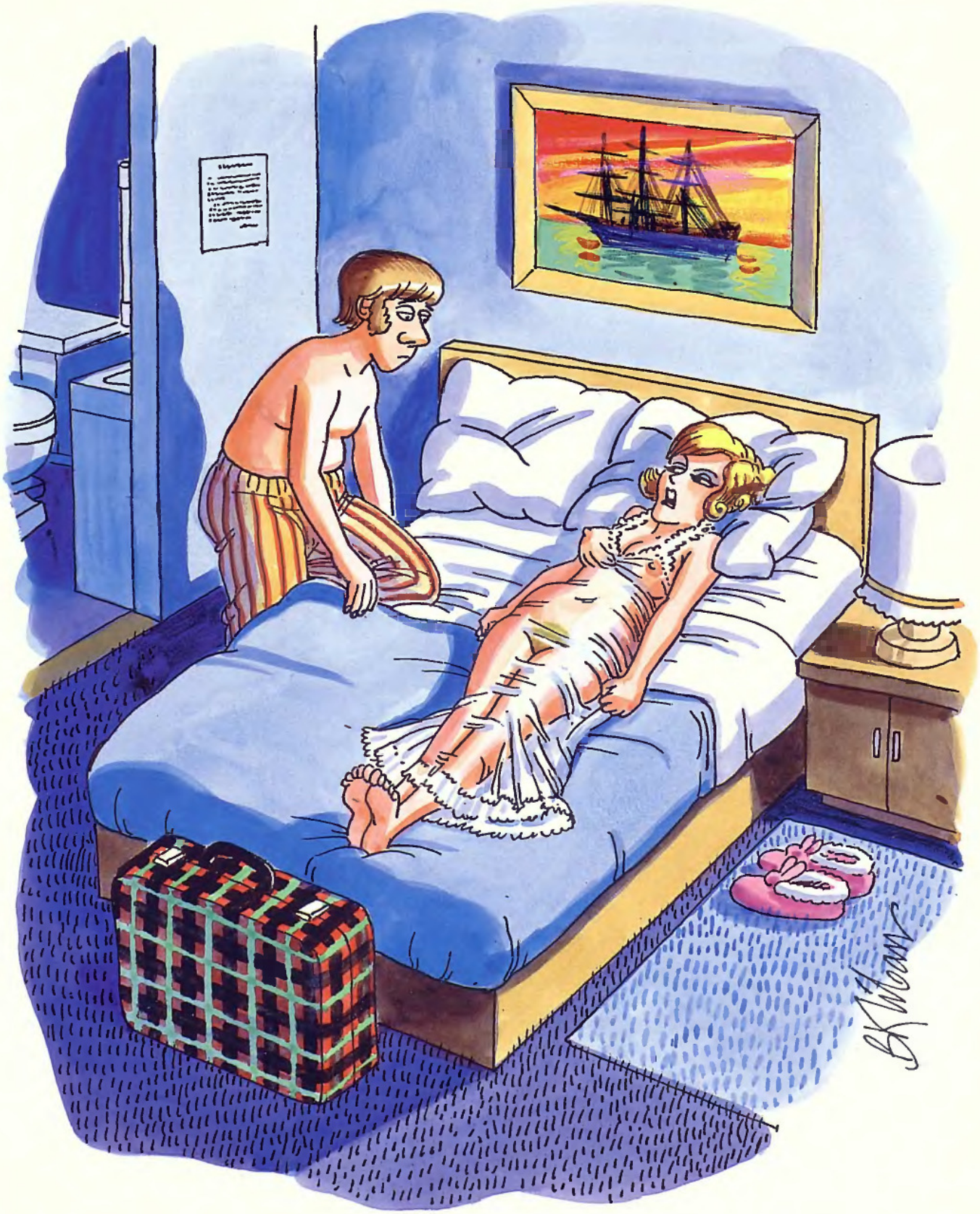
Coming to my rescue, Rachel stretched a leg across the couch and kicked Lesley playfully. "Jesus, Lez, be cool."

"Oh, I'm just playing with him," Lesley chirped, her face aglow. "You know I'm just playing, don't you, Dave?"

In fact, I *didn't* know she was playing. I didn't know that at all. But to let on that I couldn't take a joke was surely to invite more of her invective, so I said, "Hey, man, of course."

"Well," Rachel said, "OK, then." We all drank our beer. I wanted to stand up and say, *Hey, fuck you, Lesley, OK? Just*

*(continued on page 136)*



*"I know what you want, Howard! I can read you like a book!"*

# *Free at Last*

la toya jackson's independence movement takes another daring turn

I'VE BEEN ASKED a million times why I agreed to appear in *Playboy* in March 1989. Having grown up under the strict tenets of the Jehovah's Witnesses, I have to confess that I approached the whole thing very naïvely. Originally, I agreed to be photographed fully clothed; but even then, I wavered on my decision and reneged on the deal.

The funny thing is, I'd never really seen a copy of the magazine. One time, I looked at a piece it ran on the Jacksons, but I didn't dare look at any of the pictorials, since reading a magazine like *Playboy* constituted grounds for immediate disfellowship from the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Before posing, I looked through several issues of the magazine. I knew some of the women who'd posed nude over the years, and I admired them immensely. Then it struck me, *What is wrong with appearing in* Playboy*? Why shouldn't I?* I realized that my initial negative reaction hadn't been based on my true feelings but either on what the leaders of my church might think or on how my parents would react. What about what *I* thought?

That was one of the first times in my life when I made a decision based on what I felt was right for me. In fact, I was facing life on my own for the first time, having left home and the clutches of my overprotective parents in the spring of 1988, less than a year before I met with *Playboy*. Still, my parents' hold spanned thousands of miles, and they were wearing me down with their constant pleas and threats. I'd told them repeatedly that I was on my own at last, yet they persisted in asking when I was coming home to live. My mother and I had been extremely close. My father, Joseph, who was dictatorial and abusive, also served as my manager. The only way to escape his control was to leave home.

The battle against my sheltered upbringing was difficult, compounded by constant criticism concerning the choices I was making on the direction of my career. In 1988, for example, after the release of my album *You're Gonna Get Rocked*, my sister Janet called to alert me that I'd been the subject of several family meetings.

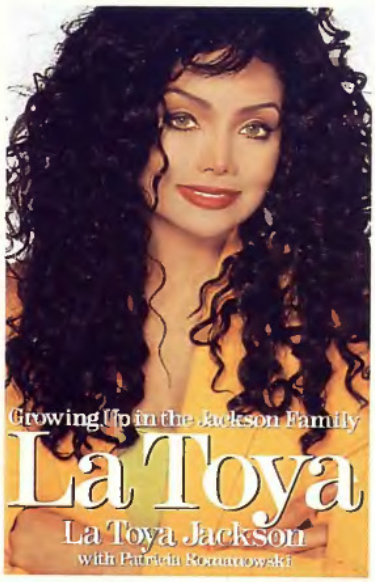
"About what?"

"About the way you're dressed on your new album cover." At one of these, I later found out, my brother Marlon defended me, saying, "I'm not attending any more of these meetings. It's ridiculous. Let her live her own life. Why are you guys always trying to control her? Besides, the album's out. It's over and done with."

The controversial article of clothing was a rhinestone-encrusted leather brassiere-style top—provocative but hardly revealing by today's standards. Still, Jermaine was outraged, as was Mother. You'd have thought they had just come off the farm, with no idea that pop music and a sexy image go hand in hand. "La Toya," Mother cautioned, "you have to be careful about the kind of pictures you take. Be really careful."

I listened, my heart pounding, as I thought, Wait until she sees what's coming next.

The *Playboy* connection was one of those crazy things. Had I not been confronting my new-found independence, I certainly would have turned down the magazine's offer. Discussions went on for months under utmost secrecy. You'd have thought the magazine was publishing Pentagon secrets. The project even had a code name: Toyota.




For this, her second *Playboy* pictorial, La Toya Jackson has contributed pictures and words—an excerpt from her new book. She's also joining us in a hot 900-number promotion. (Details on page 175.)

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN WAYDA

The photo sessions took place in New York in November 1988. To ensure complete privacy, *Playboy* rented the Neil Simon Theater on Broadway. From the beginning, I insisted that everything be done tastefully and artistically. In my mind, that still meant not showing *anything*.

Stephen Wayda, the photographer, had me pose for the picture that opened the layout, in which I have a finger raised to my pursed lips, as if I'm saying "Shhhh!" Well, my robe slipped down, exposing a breast. When I realized it, I thought I would faint on the spot. But when Stephen showed me the test Polaroid, I saw it wasn't so bad after all. The final day of shooting went very smoothly. I had the most fun when I posed with a 60-pound Burmese python. I love snakes and wanted to do a shot all covered with them. I was disappointed that there was only one; I'd envisioned six or seven.

Once the magazine hit the newsstand, Arsenio Hall joked on TV that my breasts weren't real. Sorry, Arsenio. When I first heard his comments, I considered sending him X rays to prove him wrong. But then I decided, Why give him any satisfaction? Besides, in the grand scheme of things, controversy over my breasts' authenticity seemed pretty silly. (One good thing to come out of the pictorial: Speculation that Michael and I were the same person was permanently laid to rest.)

Prior to the publication date, I was contractually forbidden to disclose anything about the pictures to anyone, including my own family. I *had* to tell somebody, though, and decided to confide in Janet when she visited me in New York around Christmastime.

"Jan, I'd really like to talk to you," I said. "It's important."

"Well, then, start talking," she snapped, without looking up from her coloring book. We had been so close, but Janet then lived at home with my parents, who remained unhappy and vocal about my declaration of independence and may have driven the wedge between us.

"It's personal," I responded. "Can't we go into another room and talk privately? I hardly ever see you."

"No, we can talk here." There were other people around, so I let it drop, somewhat hurt by her abruptness.

Several weeks before the issue hit the stands in January 1989, I phoned home. As usual, while I talked to Mother, Joseph listened in on the extension. We were having a pleasant conversation for a change, when suddenly he interjected, "Kate, tell her!"

"Tell her what?" Mother asked innocently.

"Tell her, tell her what you heard," he urged.

"I didn't hear anything."

"You know what you heard, Kate!" Joseph said in annoyance. "All right, *I'll* tell her. La Toya, I heard that you posed for the centerfold of *Playboy*. Did you?"

"Of course not," I answered nervously. "I would never do anything like that."

"OK. You'd better be telling the truth," he said, "because somebody said that they saw some pictures."

"No, I didn't pose for the *centerfold*," I said, which, if you wanted to get technical, was true.

Janet called later to ask the same question. Again, I denied it. Then Michael phoned a few days after that. This was the one I'd been bracing myself for, because Hugh Hefner had called to let me know that Michael had shown up unexpectedly at the Playboy Mansion,

ostensibly to visit the exotic animals. Somehow, he had obtained photocopies of the layout; I knew they weren't from Hef. When my brother called, I guessed he might know something, but I had no idea he'd actually seen the photos.

We spoke for a long time without mention of the pictures. I couldn't stand it any longer. "I heard you were at Hef's house the other day," I said.

After a moment's silence, Michael replied, "Yeah. How did you know?"

"They told me. What were you doing there?"

"Just visiting."

"Do you want to ask me something, Mike?"

"Uh, no."

"Are you sure?"

*(text continued on page 158)*

# IN THE GRIP OF TREACHERY

**he killed his best friend.**

**his partner ratted on him.**

**his boss ordered his death.**

**now nick "the crow" caramandi tells us what everyday life was like inside the vicious philly mob**

IN 1987, *Mobster Nicholas "The Crow" Caramandi pleaded guilty to murder, racketeering and conspiring with a Philadelphia city councilman (Leland Beloff) to extort $1,000,000 from a real-estate developer. Since then, The Crow has been singing. He has testified in 11 trials, resulting in more than 52 convictions. Not since Joe Valachi spilled the beans three decades earlier has a "made" member done this much harm to "this thing of ours," La Cosa Nostra.*

*Caramandi, 56, rose to become the right-hand man and top moneymaker for Philadelphia's Nicodemo "Little Nicky" Scarfo, arguably the most brutal and violent Mob boss of this era.*

*Considering Scarfo's short reign, the size and scope of his family's businesses throughout Philadelphia and south New Jersey were staggering. At the time of the don's 1986 indictment, the gang was raking in $25,000,000 to $30,000,000 annually just from illegal gambling (numbers, video poker, sports betting), and millions more from loansharking, shakedowns of drug dealers and various labor unions. Even bigger deals were in the making: Scarfo was preparing to control more than $200,000,000 in Philadelphia waterfront-development projects, as well as to infiltrate the union benefits plans of Atlantic City's bartenders and waitresses.*

*By flipping, Caramandi triggered the fall of Scarfo, the only Mafia chief ever to be convicted of*

conversation with
RICHARD BEHAR

ILLUSTRATION BY MIKE BENNY

*first-degree murder, as well as the virtual destruction of the entire Philadelphia family. Caramandi's actions helped create a rash of double-dealing. Among those he ratted on was Scarfo's nephew Philip "Crazy Phil" Leonetti, who is now a key witness in the current trial of Gambino family boss John Gotti in New York. An account of the Philadelphia Mob, "Blood and Honor," was published last month.*

*A year ago, Caramandi was released from prison and he now lives far from Philadelphia with a new identity and a death sentence on his head. After meticulous planning, he agreed to meet secretly with me in a hotel room in the South. Extensive follow-up interviews were conducted by telephone, with The Crow calling me from an untraceable phone line. "How ya doin', buddy?" he would always begin, with a deep, gravelly voice that bespoke his shadowy past.*

*Is today's Mob as glamourous as Hollywood likes to suggest? Well, it has its moments, but the picture that emerges from talks with Caramandi is of a brotherhood of such blackhearted betrayal that it could hold its own against the late Roman Empire. From this snake pit of deceit and treachery that defined the Philadelphia Mob in particular, everybody emerged as a loser—a loser who had deluded himself into believing that he would somehow beat the odds.*

---

*The FBI has been cracking down on the Mob during the past decade. Is this the beginning of the end?*

The FBI can't get out of their own fucking way. It's such a bureaucracy. This thing of ours, you can't kill it.

*Why not?*

It's the second government. We have our own courts, our own sentences for people. We serve needs. People come to us when they can't get justice, or to borrow money that they can't get from the bank. Who the fuck is gonna stop us? It never dies. It's as powerful today as it ever was. It's just more glorified and more out in the open.

*How high in society does the Mob reach?*

If politicians, doctors, lawyers, entertainment people all come to us for favors, there's got to be a reason. It's because we're the best. There are no favors we can't do. Take this city councilman guy Beloff [sentenced to ten years for conspiring with the Mob]. Some guy was gonna run against him and he was a little worried. I said, "Don't worry 'bout nothin'. Nicky said we'll kill the motherfucker the day before the election if we have to." He said, "Oh, thank God." He was tickled to death. He was relieved to hear that.

*So why did you squeal?*

It's an awful fuckin' thing to get up there and point the finger. I loved some of those guys. It was only supposed to be a couple of them in the beginning, and then the Government made me tell on everyone. The list grew and grew and grew because I was so

**We have our own courts, our own sentences. We serve needs. People come to us when they can't get justice, or to borrow money that they can't get from the bank. . . . If politicians, doctors, lawyers, entertainment people all come to us for favors, there's got to be a reason. It's because we're the best. There are no favors we can't do."**

Fort Lauderdale, 1986. Some of the Mobsters and some of the crimes they've committed: Front row center, with sunglasses, Charles Iannece (Nicholas Caromondi's partner). Behind him, with gold chain, Joseph Ligambi (a Nicodemo Scarfo soldier, convicted of murder). Top row, from left: Philip Leonetti (Scarfo's nephew and underboss, convicted of RICO charges, became a Government witness in 1989), Nicodemo Scarfo (Philly Mob boss, serving life for murder), unidentified boy, Nicholas Milano (convicted of murder), Francis Iannorella, Jr. Behind him, in sunglasses, Anthony "Pung" Pungitore (Scarfo soldier, convicted of RICO), Frank Norducci, Jr. (Scarfo hit man, convicted of murder). In front of him, in sunglasses, Caromandi. On far right, top row, is Scarfo's son Mark, who, despondent over his father's lifestyle, hanged himself and remains in a coma. ● Above right: Caramandi (with cigarette) with Lawrence "Yogi" Merlino (former Scarfo capo). ● Right: Iannece, Caramondi, Scarfo and Ligambi hit the beach.

valuable to them. The fuckin' Government strips you, man. They really get their money's worth.

*What led to your arrest?*

The FBI had wired a partner of mine in the construction business for eighteen months. I was doing fifteen things at a time when I got pinched: shakin' down drug dealers, hunting people to kill, taking care of Scarfo's businesses. We were moving into the unions in Atlantic City. I had about two hundred million dollars in construction business from the Philly waterfront coming my way. I had about a hundred fifty guys

**I was sick and tired of capos. They tried to kill me four times trying to set me up. Now, when you're with the**

The scene is a Philly street near the clubhouse, 1984. Charles Iannece is the man directly beneath the awning. To the right are an unidentified man, then comes Caramandi and, in front of another unidentified man, John "Johnny Cupcakes" Melilli (a Scarfo family associate).

workin' for me. I didn't want to be a fuckin' rat. I would never have turned, but in jail, I was getting bad vibes about Scarfo.

*What sort of vibes?*

This lawyer in the jail library walks over to me and says, "You got a problem." I said, "A problem? What do you mean, a problem?" He said, "It's nothin', nothin'." So I asked this inmate to get his lawyer to find out what this guy meant, and ten days later, he comes back to me and says, "You've got a problem. Scarfo turned on you." And he made the sign of the gun with his finger and said, "This is for you." I figured the niggers in the jail would carry out the order. I was scared to death and I called the FBI and told them to get me the hell out of there.

*Why do you think Scarfo turned on you?*

He was a very vicious, very paranoid guy. He would turn on members all the time for no reason. You never knew where you stood. He was the kind of guy who would call meetings, get us all together for dinner and order double margaritas for everyone. They're deadly. Scarfo would use them to open people up, make them talk, see what was on their minds. You get a guy loosened up, his true inner feelings come out. You know, all the hard-ons come out. And Scarfo knew

**boss, everyone's scared of you, because you have the boss's ear and nobody knows what you're sayin' to him. The treachery in this thing of ours! Nicky once said, 'We have the whole fuckin' world against us. Why do we have to fight one another?'"**

how to play guys that way. And he knew how to control his own booze. He'd drink Scotch and water and he'd keep cutting it. So you'd be bombed and he'd still be drinking. He could stay with you for ten, fifteen hours and not get drunk. That was his secret.

*Where did you fit into the family hierarchy?*

Until I went direct with Scarfo [became a right-hand man], me and my partner, Charlie White [Charles Iannece, now serving 40 years], had to report to two *capos*. They were two vicious motherfuckers. One was Faffy [Francis Iannarella, Jr., now serving life plus 45 years]. The other guy was Tommy [Thomas Del Giorno]. Tommy's in the witness-protection program. He's a stool pigeon, too. These two birds, I watched them destroy so many people. They were very tricky and cunning.

Faffy was the snake in the background, the instigator, but he never showed his hand. He's the guy who went to Scarfo and beefed on the guy who had sponsored him, and that was Chuckie [Salvatore Merlino], the underboss. Tommy used to try to draw me into punching Chuckie on different occasions, and had I done that, I would have been dead.

*What did they gain by the back stabbing?*

What they were trying to do was hurt people within so that they could move up, which they did. Then Faffy beefed on Tommy, who was his best friend, for his drunkenness and for getting into arguments with people. So they took Tommy down, and then Faffy had the run of the city.

*Did a lot of the bullshit stop when you became Scarfo's right-hand man?*

Eventually, me and Charlie got to be direct with Scarfo, so there were no *capos* we had to report to. Being direct is better than being a *capo*. A *capo* has headaches, worrying all the time about soldiers' coming to you every ten minutes with problems, where I just go to the boss and have a free hand in everything. I was sick and tired of *capos*. They tried to kill me four times trying to set me up. Now, when you're with the boss, everyone's scared of you, because you have the boss's ear and nobody knows what you're sayin' to him.

*It sounds like you had to worry more about your own members than other Mob families or even the Feds.*

Whew, the treachery in this thing of ours! Without rats, the FBI couldn't do anything. You know, Nicky Whip [Nicholas Milano] once said to me, "We have the whole fuckin' world against us. Why do we have to fight one another?" Nicky Whip is now doin' life for murder. His brother, Gino [Eugene Milano], testified against him.

*You said before that Tommy and Faffy, your capos, tried to get people killed. How?*

One time, Tommy sent a guy into the neighborhood to buy oil to make meth [P2P for methamphetamine]. This guy says to me, "I hear there's oil around." I said, "I

don't have no oil." See, you could be killed if you deal drugs in the Mob. The next day, Tommy comes around and says, "Somebody says you got oil." So I said, "Let me tell you something. Before I would sell oil, I'd jump off a fuckin' bridge." So Tommy says, "Well, I just want to say that if you are, buddy, I'll help and protect you." See, he's tryin' to trap me. I'll never forget the night Scarfo gave the order to kill Salvie [Salvatore Testa]. He was twenty-eight, at twenty-five the youngest *capo* of any Mob family in the country and a great kid. Tommy comes around to the clubhouse and says, "Boy, I gotta tell you what happened. Faffy really buried [betrayed] Salvie last night. And I helped. Ha, ha, ha, ha." He made the sign of the gun and said, "Salvie's got to go" and then asked me if I had any ideas. I said, "I have a few ideas."

*Why did Salvie have to die?*

He had committed himself to marrying the underboss' daughter and had backed out at the last moment.

*You've got to be joking.*

No joke. It was the ultimate insult. But there was no good reason for killing him. I feel a lot of remorse about Salvie. We stalked him for eighteen months. I made seventeen attempts to kill him. I couldn't get close enough to him. His antennas were up and he knew he was in trouble.

*You guys always seem to run for the hills when you're marked. Why didn't he?*

Well, he wasn't that type of guy. This fucking kid was a real man. He didn't want to believe that Nicky would sell him down the river. As much as he knew the game, he didn't know it that well. We finally killed him in a store and dumped the body on a road in New Jersey. And then, for months afterward, I used to wake up in the middle of the night screaming. I would wake up crying and sobbing.

*What did you see in those nightmares?*

I'd see his body lying on the highway for hours and hours, with his arms and legs stickin' out. He had shorts on that day and we covered him with a blanket. That was awful. I went and bought a blanket at a JC Penney store, but it wasn't big enough. It took all night to clean the fucking store where we killed him. We had a clean-up crew go in there after. Then we had a clean-up crew just to clean the truck out. There was so much blood. It was just an awful fucking thing.

*It's unusual to hear a hit man express such sentiment.*

I think about him all the time. I was very close to this fella. I really, really got to like him. And he liked me. The guy was something special to me. I never was close to a guy like I was to him, in all my life.

*Was he like a son?*

Sort of. He was young, but he was so sharp and mature in so many ways. I really miss him. He was all you could expect in this business, and more. He was a tough kid. His father had been killed a long time ago, blown up on his porch with a bomb made of finishing nails.

*What was it like once you got back to Philadelphia after you killed Salvie?*

Well, there was a big fucking dinner at a fancy restaurant. We walked in and Scarfo asked if everything went OK. I said, "Everything went OK. It should be on the news any minute now." Charlie, my partner, had blood on his shirt. [*Laughs*] He didn't even change his shirt.

*You also wound up killing your mentor, Pasquale "Pat the Cat" Spirito. Why?*

He had talked treason and that's what got him killed. Me and Pat were in a corner luncheonette drinking coffee for nearly four hours, and I'm talking him into believin' I would die for him. He had bad vibes. He said, "I trust you so much I would give my life for you." I looked him right in the eyes and said, "So would I, Pat. I love you. I wouldn't be here if it weren't for you. We've been through so much together." I'm lying like a motherfucker. He's tryin' to smoke me out and I'm just strokin' him. Meanwhile, it's already set up to kill him the next day.

*How did you do it?*

We told him that we got word that Sonny [Mario] Riccobene, who we were all trying to kill, would be at a certain restaurant. So Pat calls me six fuckin' times. "Do we have to go?" he asks. "Why nine o'clock? Why this? Why that?" Anyway, it's all set up. Pat's driving. We go to Charlie's house, toot the horn. He comes out and puts the gun on the floor in the back. The plan is that we drive a few blocks and Charlie says he forgot his money. This was all psychology. We're just blowin' smoke. I say, "What do you need?" He says two hundred dollars and I hand it to him. We go to Eleventh Street and we tell Pat to pull over so we can give the two hundred dollars to some guy. Pat pulls over. *Bang!* That quick. The noise was so fuckin' loud. *Bang!* His head shakes. I jump out and the car is rolling because it's still in gear. Big Charlie, who weighs two hundred pounds, can't get out of the back seat until we smash into a parked car. We run to a driver waiting for us, then go a few blocks and throw the gun into the street. In this business, you have to have a place to get washed, along with a change of clothes. We use vinegar on the hands and fingernails to get out the powder burns and bloodstains.

*What next?*

I went around the corner to a neighborhood bar. Ordered a Scotch and water. Stood there waiting for the eleven-o'clock news. When it came on, I was cryin' about how they killed my best friend. I made sure I had witnesses who said I was in the bar all night.

*Did you have trouble sleeping after that?*

No, we were just glad it was over. But now I feel bad about the guy. Nobody's life is worth taking. Today I feel bad about some of those unnecessary killings. You don't realize how precious a life is until you're in that position where you're gonna get killed and you'll do anything to survive. And look what I did. I went on that stand twenty fucking times and it killed me. It wasn't easy. I went through hell at the beginning. My head was all fucked up. I couldn't cope with the disgrace of it.

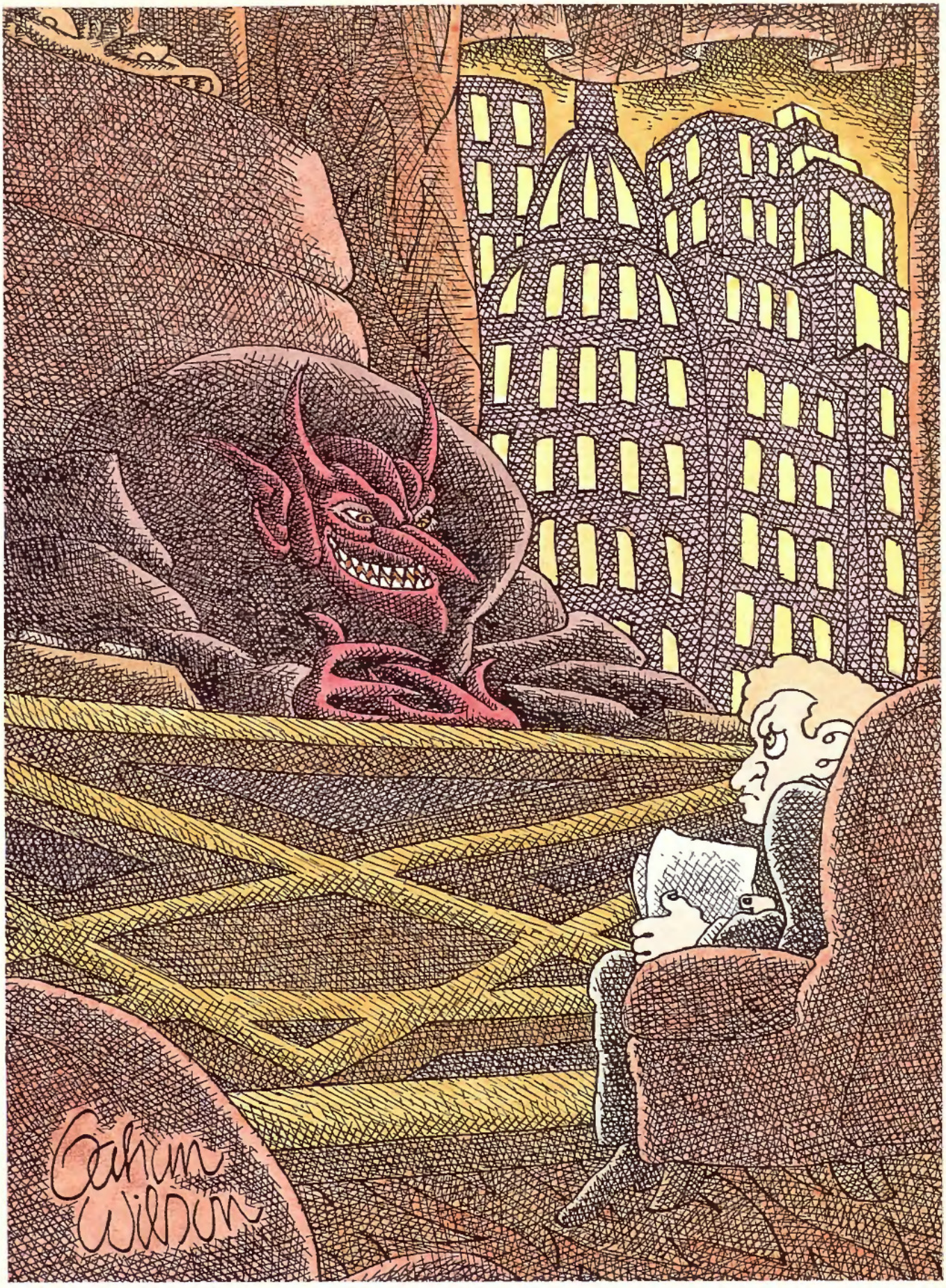
*Before your arrest, did you ever feel that you were about to get killed yourself?*

Before I was made, when I was just a proposed member, we had been asked to kill Sonny Riccobene. We were stalking him for about a year. One day, Pat the Cat came around to this Italian restaurant and said that Salvie [Testa], the *capo*, wanted to see me. I said, "What the fuck does he want to see me for?" He said, "I don't know, he wants to see you." I said, "Why me?" He says, "Well, he wants you to take him to that house where Sonny's girlfriend lives to have a look at it." I said, "So he wants Charlie, my partner, to go, too?" He says, "No, he just wants you." So my antennas go up. It had taken us so long to kill Sonny, and I figured Pat the Cat was setting me up, blaming me for it. Now I'm scared to death. Why do I have to go? I start to argue with him. The paranoia's coming out. I give Charlie a look and I'm tryin' to catch a vibe from him. See, you can't trust nobody, because it's usually your best friends who are gonna be the ones to kill you.

*So did you go and meet Salvie?*

I had to. I met Salvie and he says we're gonna take a ride to see this house. I said, "Well, I might not remember where it's at." He says, "Nah, you'll remember, let's just take a ride. Maybe it'll come back to you." There's a guy with him, another proposed member, wearing a jacket. I figure there's a gun under it. Salvie says to me, "We'll take your car." There are four doors, so I go for the back door. And he says, "No, sit in the front." Holy Christ! So now I'm ready to break. I'm ready to run. I figured this was it. But if I ran, where the fuck was I going, anyway? So I put it in my head that this is the end. I get in the car. Nobody's saying much. And we drive to this house, outside Philly, for an hour and a half. I was sweating bullets. Any move that I caught I was going to dive out the door.

*(continued on page 104)*



*"Don't try to tell me you never so much as guessed that I might be running this corporation!"*

# MAIL SUPREMACY

**cash in on catalog chic—and let your phone and credit cards do the walking**

*fashion*
By HOLLIS WAYNE

INSTEAD OF SPENDING your Saturdays tramping the streets in search of the latest styles, try letting the clothes come to you. The key is finding fashion catalogs to fit your tastes. Many catalog companies now sell the same designer labels that you'll find in top stores. Others manufacture their own lines. A few even specialize in hard-to-fit sizes. The King Size catalog (800-456-0337), for example, offers clothes for big and tall guys, while Wallaby Station (312-883-4477) is into styles for diminutive gents. And there are catalogs, such as the one from J. Peterman, that combine exciting clothes with great accessories, such as the leather briefcase that's pictured in this feature.

Left: A pig-suede baseball-style jacket, from the Eddie Bauer catalog, about $200; worn with a denim banded-collar shirt, from the Norm Thompson catalog, $48; a cotton-knit sweat shirt, from The Territary Ahead catalog, $55; Perry Ellis America jeans, from the Spiegel catalog, about $50; and a leather belt, from The Territory Ahead, $39. (Her sweater and turtleneck are from J. Crew mail order.) Right: Another jacket that's on target, only this Avirex USA leather bomber model is from the Cockpit catalog, $420; and stone-washed jeans, from the Smythe & Co. catalog, $32.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LUCA BABINI

Catalog shopping is the way to go if time is in short supply and you're willing to pay extra for overnight delivery. Left, clockwise from the top: Harness-leather belt with sunray-motif buckle, from the James Reid catalog, $385. Suede rucksack with full-grain-leather base, from Eddie Bauer, $145. Soft deerskin gloves with removable wool liner that can be worn separately, from the JCPenney catalog, $60. Nubuck lace-up chukka boots by Rockport, from Norm Thompson, $92. Geometric alpoca crew-neck sweater, from The Peruvian Connection catalog, $220. Solar-cell watch with gold-plated setting stem, polished bezel, date calendar and leather strop, from Norm Thompson, $199. Tucked into the pocket of the rucksack ore a pair of Tasco wide-ongle rubber binoculars with fold-down eyecups, from JCPenney, $60; and a pewter contoured flosk, from the L.S Collection catalog, $75. Right: Suits and sports coots usually should be tried on in a store to ensure the proper fit, but oversized jackets—a smart mail-order buy—are designed to hang loose. The guy at right is sporting a plaid wool-blend melton model with notched collar, from James River Traders catalog, $85; with an Oakton cotton-chambray buttondown shirt, from the Sears catalog, $19; an alpaca five-button cardigon, from The Peruvian Connection, $142; and burgundy cotton five-pocket jeans, from the Tweeds catalog, $36. (Her coat by Emporio Armani.)

Here are a few more goodies to order, pronto. Left, clockwise from the top: St. John's Bay wool baseball-style cap with brushed-pigskin visor, from JCPenney, $20. M. C. Escher silk geometric tie and silk butterfly-print tie, both from the Flax art and design catolog, $28 each. Leather briefcase with brass-buckle closures and leather handle, from the J. Peterman catalog, $330. Montblanc Diplomat fountain pen with 18-kt.-gold two-tone nib, from the Fahrney's catalog, about $280. Solid-brass World War Two commemorative lighter, from the Harley-Davidson MotorClothes and Collectibles catalog, about $20. Stainless-steel digital watch, designed by Fleming 8o Hansen, from the L.S Collection, $345. Combed-cotton polo sweater with ribbed trim on cuffs, hem and collar, from Tweeds, about $40. M & Company's pocket watch with solid brass casings, matte-black chrome finish and a matching nine-inch black pocket chain, from Flax art and design, $200. And harness-leather belt with sterling-silver rope buckle, from the James Reid catalog, about $300. Right: For a look at whot's in in outerwear, there are several great catalogs to check out, including Eddie 8auer, Tweeds and J. Petermon. One of our favorite styles is this lambskin water-repellent jacket, from The Territory Ahead, about $700. (Her coat and crew-neck sweater, both by Emporio Armani; and denim blue jeans, by Antique 8outique.)

Where & How to 8uy
on page 171.

MAKE-UP BY JOE MCDEVITT/PIERRE MICHEL. HAIR STYLING BY GABRIELE VIGORELLI/PIERRE MICHEL

# GRIP OF TREACHERY *(continued from page 96)*

*"'Go get a .25, small caliber, and shoot him. If he dies, he dies. We're too old for baseball bats.'"*

My whole life ran in front of me as we drove. But it was a legitimate trip and in that case, I was worried for nothin'.

*Why were you trying to kill Sonny Riccobene?*

The guy we were really after was his stepbrother, Harry. We had told Sonny, "Look, you want to get on the right side with us, set your brother up. We'll take care of you and make sure that nice things happen to you." Instead, Sonny turned around and told his brother. So we were goin' to kill him, too.

*How could you expect him to finger his own brother?*

Well, it was said that he was such a blackhearted bastard that he might have gone for it. He wound up testifying against his own brother, anyway, in a trial. Now he's in the witness-protection program.

*You gave plenty of beatings to people in your time. Does it physically feel good to do that to another person?*

Yeah, sometimes you get joy out of that. There's pleasure, you know. There's satisfaction. I mean, it wasn't that you'd punch a guy and knock him out and that was it. I mean, we'd hurt them. I mean, literally hit them with fuckin' anything you could hit 'em with, kick 'em, cut 'em. Guys lost eyes and ears. See, once you start, you can't stop. You're all psyched up, the adrenaline. You want to kill them. You don't give a fuck if you kill 'em or not. We never had to worry about witnesses, because who was going to be a witness against us?

*What about the families of members who get wiped out? Aren't they ever willing to come forward?*

Never. One time, a friend stabbed a guy, Ralph, who was with me on my step. So I bring him into the house, three o'clock in the fucking morning. My friend had put a big kitchen knife right down in Ralph's shoulder blade. Ralph's dying. He's sittin' at the table, sayin' he's gonna go home and get a gun to kill him. I say, "Ralph, you can't do it, he's a friend of mine, you gotta forget it." All of a sudden, my feet are wet. I look down and see all this blood, and then I see the blood shoot up to the ceiling, a nine-foot ceiling. He's bleeding to death! I get him to a hospital and he's being given his last rites by the priest. I go to see his wife and tell her, "Look, whatever happens, you got to say that two niggers tried to rob him and stabbed him and ran away." Now she knows who did it. But she understood that she had to say nothing.

*Did you ever slam people around for the hell of it? Just to throw your weight around?*

Some guys do that. Every night, there was a fight somewhere. Say a guy is sitting in a chair in a joint and there's no place to sit. "Get the fuck up," and just chase the guy off the chair. The younger kids would bust up joints and the next day, we'd have to go over and explain it. I was a little too old for that bullshit myself. All I had to do was tell these kids, go into this joint and wreck it and that was it.

*Would you hurt a person who was not in the Mob just for being rude to you?*

If some guy got fresh, sure, we'd knock the shit out of him. We were on a street corner once in Philly, it was a real hot summer day and we had the fire hydrant open. Some kid, about twenty, speeds up in a car, turns real fast and splashes me. "Hey, you motherfucker!" I yelled. He speeds up and then parks on the pavement. "Oh, so the cocksucker lives there." So now six of us go running toward the house, bust the fucking door down, drag the kid out and start banging him around. Now, the mother is upstairs fucking—this is a funny story—she's upstairs fucking her boyfriend. The boyfriend comes out of the house to find out what happened and—bing, bing, bing, bing—my friends half killed him. Just left him in the street. The kid, they already buried him. Now the mother comes out screaming and they are gonna hit her.

*It's not wise to have a bad attitude around you wiseguys.*

I went with a partner to see this drug dealer one time. I said, "You gotta pay, kid." He said, "No, I don't pay gangsters." I said, "You got a bad fucking attitude." Now, I'm thinking, For a fucking guy to think like this, he's got a gun, this kid. I said, "You motherfucker, you got a gun, ain't you?" As soon as I said that, he went for it and we bopped him. We dragged him into a clothing store and left him for dead. We hit him with sticks, kicked him and busted his face with the gun. He didn't have a chance. We left the kid in a pool of blood. They called an ambulance and nobody in the store, which was wrecked, said anything. We kept the gun. Another time, a bouncer busted the nose of my partner Charlie's kid. I had had an incident with this bouncer once before, so we went to Scarfo and said, "We want to hurt this guy with some baseball bats." Scarfo said, "Fuck them baseball bats. Go get a .25, small caliber, and shoot him. If he dies, he dies. We're too old for bats."

*What would, say, an upscale civilian do if he wanted someone's face broken? How does someone find the Mob?*

It's everywhere you go, but if you're not looking for it, you're not gonna see it. We don't go out there and wave fucking flags, you know. Someone you know could know someone who's an associate of the Mob. He might say, "Look, I got a friend with a problem. Can I get some help?" And the associate will go and talk to a soldier. I'm sure if you asked hard enough, you'd come up with somebody. If it came to me, maybe I'd want to talk to you about your problem. Then I'd tell your friend to tell you we'd take care of it. We'd do the favor. I probably wouldn't directly tell you anything.

*What's it gonna cost me?*

Nothing. We don't get paid to do things. That's greed. Maybe you'll send me a case of whiskey or champagne. Or maybe you'll owe me a favor. By that time, I would know all about you. Somebody might come and see you someday.

*What if I'm too scared to return the favor? Do I end up in cement?*

That's just Hollywood bullshit. I wouldn't put you under any kind of pressure. We don't do things like that to legitimate people. It would be a nothing favor, you understand? It wouldn't be a heavy-duty favor. Say you were in the rug business and you could give me a cheaper price, or you could give somebody I know a job.

*You mean you might beat the living shit out of someone I hate and all you might want in return would be a discount on some carpeting?*

Yeah, if it presents itself. Maybe you'll never return the favor. There's no obligation.

*Tell us how you grew in this business.*

I left school when I was fifteen and went to work to help support a younger brother, to help my mother out. I got married early, had two boys and left them when they were three, four years old. I hung around on the corner with older guys, neighborhood toughs. I stole, I flimflammed, sold drugs. I did everything you could possibly think of in the way of crime. I was always angling. My nickname was The Crow—a shrewd bird. I made a career out of selling people things I didn't have, because greed blinds so many. You know, you can't cheat an honest man. And the better quality of dishonest people you deal with—people like doctors, lawyers, professionals—they're easier to rob, because they're greedy and they don't have the street mentality to spot a

*(continued on page 162)*

*"Oh, no! It's that stupid, mixed-up werewolf mooning at the bay again!"*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN WAYDA

miss november, tonja christensen,
nurtures a career in catalonia

# A BLONDE IN BARCELONA

BLONDE, BLUE-EYED and gutsy Tonja Marie Christensen, who just turned 20, has come a long way in the past two years—5800 miles, to be exact, the distance from West Valley City, Utah, a sleepy suburb of Salt Lake City, to cosmopolitan Barcelona, Spain's second largest city. There, while the Catalan capital gears up for the 1992 Olympics, she's diligently pursuing a dual career in modeling and acting. "I think I've grown up a lot in the past two years," she says. "For one thing, I've learned that there's a lot more to life than slinging burgers." That's what Tonja did for three and a half years at Scotts, a fast-food place back in West Valley. Our Miss November was one of nine children, an example she doesn't plan to follow. "I believe families should be three or four children at most," she says. For herself, being part of such a crowd gave her more freedom than most young girls enjoy: "Nobody was paying much attention to what I did." What she did, finally, was take off for Europe at the age of 18 with a casual friend named Eric and a photographer they'd met through a modeling agency in Salt Lake. "He told us that Spain was a good place for us

One thing about being a model in Spain—especially one with long blonde tresses—is that the more misguidedly macho members of the male population keep hitting on you. To some extent, that has been Tonja Christensen's experience. Perhaps we should warn those *hombres* about her karate technique. Still, she loves being in Barcelona, where her career highs have included a position on the cover of *Playboy*'s Spanish edition (above) and work in television and print advertising.

to get into movies and modeling," she explains. "So we went with him, landed in Amsterdam and bought an old car. It took us a month to drive to Spain." Travel can be hazardous to a relationship, and the car trip tested their patience. They survived, though, and Eric's now her best friend, the man she expects to marry eventually. They share an apartment above a bar in the resort town of Sitges, near Barcelona, "with a view to kill for—the beach is right in front." It took Tonja a while to adjust to her new surroundings. "I had to learn Spanish from scratch. I'm fluent now. I've also had to learn quite a bit of Catalan." Language isn't the only cultural difference between Sitges and Salt Lake: "It's normal to go topless on any beach here. I don't, though. I guess I'm too American." Tonja is pleased with the career strides she has made overseas. Among her credits: the cover of *Playboy*'s Spanish edition; publicity work for Pioneer electronic equipment; an episode of the TV series *Dark Justice*, which is filmed in Barcelona; a video for singer Miguel Ríos; and several commercials for Spanish television—notably, a popular one for Sanyo VCRs, for which she spent ten and a half hours being made up to look like a robot. But she's not staying in Spain forever; she plans to return to the U.S. when this issue hits the newsstands.

"To me, the most important thing in a relationship is honesty," Tonja says. "Most of the time, it hurts. But it's the only way to be with another person." Seriously, who could look into these eyes and lie?

MISS NOVEMBER
PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH
Sonja Christensen

PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: Tonja Christensen

BUST: 34 WAIST: 23 HIPS: 34

HEIGHT: 5'7" WEIGHT: 108

BIRTH DATE: 9/3/71 BIRTHPLACE: Salt Lake City, Utah

AMBITIONS: explore the world, learn about people and cultures, be a good actress, study psychology, just enjoy life.

TURN-ONS: Massages... fondue... intelligent men... humble people... nice smiles... saxophones... sunsets in Spain.

TURN-OFFS: Dishonesty, people who just won't try, egotistical people & jealousy.

FAVORITE CITY: Having traveled through Europe, I appreciate all cultures, but Venice, Italy, remains my favorite because it's so tranquil.

FAVORITE AUTHOR: Mystery writer Agatha Christie.

FAVORITE MOVIES: Dead Poets Society & Awakenings. Robin Williams is so versatile; very humorous & serious. He makes me laugh and cry.

I'M PARTICULARLY WILD ABOUT: Mountains in the springtime. Sitting around a campfire while someone plays a guitar.

up all night. Worried about those 6th-grade Final Exams.

16th Birthday Farrah Fawcett hairdo Still in style in Utah!

3 years ago. Amateur Model Amateur photographer. The shot finally got published!!

# PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

Boy, am I glad to see you guys," the forlorn businessman told his two friends, one a psychiatrist, the other a lawyer. "I need advice from one of you and may well need the services of the other."

"What's going on, buddy?" the lawyer asked.

"Well, I think I made one of those Freudian slips this morning," he replied.

"Oh?" the shrink said. "What do you mean?"

"I was sitting across the table from my wife at breakfast and what I *meant* to say was, 'Honey, would you pass the sugar,' but what came out instead was, 'You bitch, you've really fucked up my life.'"

Why does a lawyer display a copy of his certification on the dashboard of his car? So he can park in handicapped zones.

After hours of tracking, a hunter finally spotted a huge bear, took careful aim and squeezed off a shot. At the spot where the carcass should have been, however, he found nothing. The hunter felt a tap on his shoulder, turned and was face to face with the bear.

"I'm sick of you guys shooting at me," the bear said. "Now drop to your knees and blow me or I'm gonna maul your face off."

The hunter reluctantly did as he was told. A week later, he bought a bigger gun, returned to the same spot, sighted the same bear and fired. Again, no carcass. Again, a tap. "You know the routine," said the bear. "On your knees."

Finally, the frustrated hunter bought an elephant gun and went out once more to stalk the bear. Getting the animal in his sights, he pulled the trigger. While searching for the body, the hunter felt a tap on his shoulder.

"Tell me the truth," the bear said with a sigh. "You're not in this for the hunting, are you?"

Have you heard about the new Shirley MacLaine condom? It's for men who keep coming back to life.

Why do brides smile when they walk down the aisle? Because they've just realized they've given their last blow jobs.

General Norman Schwarzkopf was viewing the battlefield in the aftermath of Desert Storm when he kicked something in the sand. Upon closer inspection, he noticed it was a lamp and began to rub it. Out popped a genie who offered the general one wish. General Schwarzkopf pulled out a map of the Middle East and said, "I would like to have peace for this entire region."

"Sorry," the genie replied. "That is impossible."

Schwarzkopf folded the map and began to walk away. "Hey, wait a minute!" the genie called. "You can still have a wish."

The general thought for a moment, then said, "OK, I'd like to see the Denver Broncos win the Super Bowl."

"Hmmm," the genie pondered. "Let me see that map again."

There's a cannibal who loves fast food. He orders pizza with everybody on it.

A barroom customer who had been guzzling beer all evening without once visiting the men's room finally slid off his stool and lurched toward the front door. At the curb, the drunk unzipped his pants and prepared to relieve himself.

"Hey, pal," a nearby cop hollered, "you can't do that in the street!"

"Of course not, Officer," the fellow replied, making an arching gesture toward a vacant lot across the street. "I'm gonna do it wayyyy over there."

*Heard a funny one lately? Send it on a postcard, please, to Party Jokes Editor,* Playboy, *680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611. $100 will be paid to the contributor whose card is selected. Jokes cannot be returned.*

*"Pay no attention. It's just part of the neighborhood watch."*

# David Letterman's TOP·TOP·TEN·LISTS

**direct from the home office in walla walla, another helping of *late night* laughs**

## TOP TEN NEW SOURCES OF ENERGY

**10.**

**Bridle static cling in Joe Garagiola's pants.**

**9.**

**Build hydroelectric dam to utilize flow of spit on New York City streets.**

**8.**

**In cold-and-flu season, use foreheads of feverish youngsters to warm dinner rolls.**

**7.**

**Jackie Onassis thought to be hoarding vast reserves of soft coal in her East Side apartment.**

**6.**

**Put Curly on a treadmill; stuff beehive in his pants.**

**5.**

**Make use of steam that comes out of Quayle's ears when he tries to do long division.**

**4.**

**Big, friendly birds.**

**3.**

**Tap megadose of radiation given off by TV's broadcasting *Late Night* program.**

**2.**

**How about Superman getting off his ass?**

**1.**

**Harness the sexual tension between MacNeil and Lehrer.**

By David Letterman and the staff of *Late Night*

## JOHN SUNUNU'S TOP TEN ETHICS VIOLATIONS

**10.**

Used missile cruiser Ticonderoga to pick up carton of Luckies from Nantucket 7-Eleven.

**9.**

Used CIA technology to be 104th caller and win party weekend with Tesla.

**8.**

Altered driver's license to John "Sunoco" and tried to get free gas.

**7.**

Borrowed Fonzie's jacket from Smithsonian for Halloween party.

**6.**

Hocked original draft of Constitution at Bethesda pawnshop to buy a pair of golf slacks.

**5.**

Had Presidential helicopter fly low over yard to trim his hedges.

**4.**

Had Quayle wash his car.

**3.**

Sneaking down to warehouse to eat Government cheese.

**2.**

Midnight lap parties at the Lincoln Memorial.

**1.**

Acting weaselly in general.

## TED KENNEDY'S TOP TEN PARTY TIPS

**10.**

Having a son or a nephew around is a great icebreaker with the younger babes.

**9.**

Flaming tumblers of sambuca keep away the mosquitoes.

**8.**

Pretending to lose a contact lens is a terrific way to look up skirts.

**7.**

Make sure cocktail napkins have liability waiver on them.

**6.**

Wake up the kids after midnight for Jell-O shots.

**5.**

Mix Chivas and Ultra SlimFast: Get drunk and lose weight.

**4.**

Two words: Wang Chung.

**3.**

Invite Supreme Court Justice David Souter—that guy is a party nut job.

**2.**

Billy Dee Williams was right: Colt 45.

**1.**

Take off pants.
Mingle.

## TOP TEN AMISH SPRING-BREAK ACTIVITIES

**10.**

Drink molasses till you heave.

**9.**

Wet-bonnet contest.

**8.**

Stuff as many guys as you can into a buggy.

**7.**

Buttermilk kegger.

**6.**

Blow past the Dairy Queen on a really bitchin' Clydesdale.

**5.**

Get tattoo born to raise barns.

**4.**

Cruise streets of Fort Lauderdale shouting insults at people with zippers.

**3.**

Sleep in until six a.m.

**2.**

Drive over to Mennonite country and kick some ass.

**1.**

Churning butter naked.

## TOP TEN THINGS THAT WILL GET YOU AUDITED BY THE IRS

10. Using one of those love stamps for postage.
9. Filling in occupation as Gambino family don.
8. Filling out the form using the name Dick Hertz.
7. Calling IRS hotline and offering operator $1.50 a minute to talk dirty.
6. Writing off hitch-hiker buried in basement as a dependent.
5. In lieu of payment check, including handwritten coupon good for one "super-duper" back rub.
4. Sending in pizza crusts instead of restaurant receipts.
3. Writing off purchase of Tito Jackson album as charitable donation.
2. Claiming hookers as medical expenses.
1. Request filing extension for "until hell freezes over."

## TOP TEN REASONS NEW YORK CITY WOULD BE A GOOD PLACE FOR THE OLYMPICS

10. No shortage of starter pistols.
9. Already has cute mascot—Lou the Giant Rat.
8. New York Yankees set the tone for amateur athletics.
7. Eternal flame ceremony enhanced by milelong parade of arsonists.
6. Would give city's cabdrivers chance to cheer for their home countries in person.
5. Exciting new exhibition sport: turnstile jumping.
4. Extra traffic easily handled by city's clean and efficient monorail system.
3. Plenty of room for out-of-town visitors at Letterman's place.
2. Fun for Olympians to compare neck burns where gold medals used to be.
1. Hudson River practically made for synchronized swimming.

## TOP TEN CHANGES IN THE MUSTANG RANCH WHEN IT WAS OWNED BY THE GOVERNMENT

10. Air bags installed in headboards of all beds.
9. Popular "whipped cream" treatment used Government-surplus cheese.
8. A simple half-and-half suddenly involved hours of paperwork.
7. Chipped beef on toast.
6. Marion Barry once again interested in government work.
5. Easygoing, low-pressure atmosphere maintained by experts from Postal Service.
4. Etchings of naked women replaced by clown paintings by Gerald Ford.
3. Name changed to Fort Dix.
2. Main gate marked by giant billboard of pantsless Uncle Sam.
1. T-shirts in gift shop said I got screwed by the government.

## TOP TEN BUSINESS AND BANKING TIPS FROM NEIL BUSH

10. Demand two pieces of I.D. before lending a guy $100,000,000.

9. Business cards should include name, address and phrase my dad's the president.

8. Read my lips: Cheat on taxes.

7. Have old man call tactical nuclear strike on new bank across the street.

6. Ask Dan Quayle if he has two tens for a five. Repeat until rich.

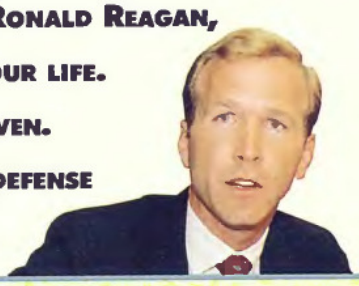
5. When somebody pays you to repave his driveway, just use black paint.

4. Slugs usually work in White House condom machine.

3. Remind reporters that, unlike Ronald Reagan, Jr., you never wore leotards in your life.

2. Big Gulp is best value at 7-Eleven.

1. If accused of bank fraud, best defense is a simple and elegant "Oops!"



## TOP TEN LEAST EXCITING SUPERPOWERS FOR COMIC BOOK SUPERHEROES

10. Super spelling.

9. Lightning-fast mood swings.

8. Really bendy thumb.

7. Unusually natural smile when posing for photographs.

6. Ability to calm jittery squirrels.

5. Power to shake exactly two aspirins out of a bottle.

4. Ability to get tickets to Goodwill Games.

3. Power to score with other superheroes' wives.

2. Ability to communicate with corn.

1. Magnetic colon.

## TOP TEN MOST FREQUENTLY RETURNED CHRISTMAS GIFTS

10. The Sunbeam Six-Slice Shower Toaster.

9. Raymond Burr's *Sweatin' to the Oldies* video cassette.

8. New York Jets play-off tickets.

7. *The Devout Moslem Nation Joke Book.*

6. The Black & Decker Forehead Sander.

5. Bag of live mice.

4. Super-Itchy Slipper-Socks from Super-Itchy Technologies, Hartford, Connecticut.

3. Dr. Kevorkian's Suicide Machine.

2. Hickory Farms Cologne.

1. "Lick Me"—The Board Game.

Every six months, we hear about drought, famine and death in Africa. The press covers the story for three weeks, charities launch relief missions and angels of mercy take wing. Yet absolutely nothing changes. Here's why the tragedy recurs and how it can be stopped.

article By DENIS BOYLES

# AN ENTIRELY MAN-MADE DISASTER

SIX YEARS AGO, I was riding in a cargo plane 30,000 feet above the conflict in Angola. My companion was a bleary, hungover Swedish pilot who was hitching a ride back to Europe. Below us, roads cut into fertile red soil and outlined fields of rich green. From five miles up, there were no signs of bombed bridges and burned-out schools, part of the mayhem and massacres that had plunged a nation into poverty and famine and had, in the span of a decade, claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. As Angola disappeared into the lush reaches of Zaire, the pilot turned to me and imparted a bit of drunken wisdom: "The higher you get, the better it all looks."

From a distance, the continent does look promising: rich resources, fertile land, great potential. At ground level, though, the view is everywhere blocked by failure. In most of Africa, there is no commerce, no education, no decent government, no jobs, no future, no money and no hope. But most of all, there's no food. Africa, once a major food producer, is now known primarily for one thing: famine.

Hideous tales of politics, rhetoric and death in Africa are so familiar to us that we have come to resent their constant presence. Once, if I had told you there was a famine in Africa, your likely reply would have been "What can be done to help?" Now, with some justification, it would be "What, *again*?"

But the current plague of hunger has concrete causes and human culprits, which is why Africa Watch calls it "an entirely man-made disaster." That is where we'll find whatever faint opportunity may still exist buried amid the hopelessness that is Africa.

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In 1986, a flamboyant UN relief worker, Staffan de Mistura, told a journalist that "to die of hunger, it takes you three months. So we have three months to work with." That's the good news. The bad news is that three months—enough time, after all, for a man to travel by foot from Ethiopia to a good restaurant in Paris—is not enough time to deliver groceries to the starving people of Africa. The reasons for our inability to do so are depressingly simple.

First, let's dispense with the usual suspect: drought. There's plenty of rain in Liberia, where most citizens are caught in cross fire between their own countrymen and where starvation is rampant. The skies open daily during rainy season in Mozambique and Angola, where warring factions dismember civilians and where nobody eats but the soldiers. This year, there are famines in seven African countries—Ethiopia, Somalia, the Sudan, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique and Angola—all running simultaneously, like horror movies in a Cineplex of misery. In a dozen other nations, famine threatens with only marginally less intensity. And although it would be easier to do so, we can't blame the weather. So where do African famines come from?

Start here: civil wars.

Imagine the scene: You're in a relief convoy—five trucks and a Land Rover full of food donated by faraway Danes and Americans, bound for a dusty camp swollen with frightened, dying refugees just around that bend, where the three MiG-21s have popped over the horizon. There are many unbelievable things in this world, but a government ordering the strafing and bombing of a relief column carrying food to its own people? It's right up there in the believe-it-or-not follies.

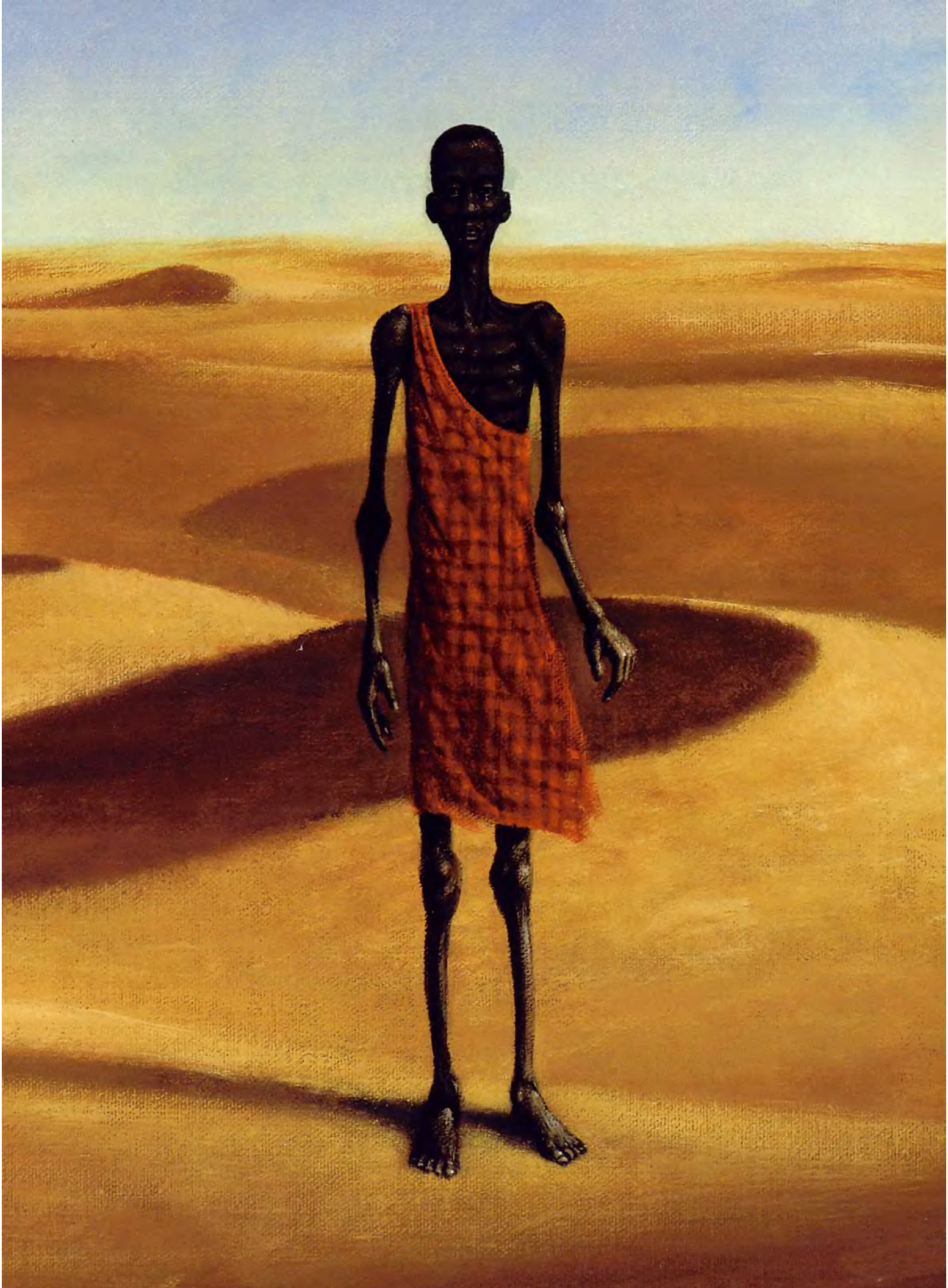
Believe it. Ethiopian and Sudanese government fliers have routinely slaughtered columns and camps of refugee civilians. The rebels in those countries, meanwhile, have routinely destroyed food shipments, lest they fall into the hands of the besieged government forces that have typically controlled the airstrips. In Africa, food and medicine are routinely used as weapons in a struggle that invariably has nothing to do with the people who are dying of hunger, people for whom politics is a bowl of rice.

For the most part, civil wars in Africa are fought to shift power from one corrupt elite to another. The media call them civil wars because it's too complicated to call them something more clarifying, such as "one bunch of well-armed yahoos trying to hold on to power while another bunch of well-armed yahoos tries to take it away." In countries such as the Sudan or Ethiopia, the purpose of government certainly isn't to ensure domestic tranquility. Its purpose is to protect the governor—who, along with his cronies, grows fat at the expense of his countrymen—from those who want his job and the power and fatness that go along with it.

The smoke from these nonstop conflicts chokes the survivors, as well, for African wars have rendered a generation or two illiterate and impoverished and have demolished families, tribes, entire societies. Worst of all, these violent disruptions create their own replication, as one or another deposed strong man, party or tribe lingers in a society, carrying out



PAINTINGS BY RAFAL OLBINSKI



guerrilla actions while awaiting the chance to exact revenge and seize power.

•

Endlessly recurring conflicts are only one cause of Africa's suffering. There's also social engineering, the forced relocation of villagers to suit the government's needs. Although the concept seems abstract, the victims are not.

The conflict in Ethiopia has made pawns out of the millions of tribespeople who lived in Eritrea, Tigre, Ogaden and all the other provinces of what was once a patchwork of tribal nations assembled in a hurry in the 1880s while Britain, the regional power most concerned, was otherwise distracted in Egypt and the Sudan. As that patchwork unraveled, Ethiopia's former president Mengistu Haile Mariam seized power and concocted various programs designed to pacify the country, primary among them, something he liked to call "villagization."

Mengistu's program, a model of the tremendous overbite that results when political correctness is given real teeth, ranks with Stalin's forced collectivization of Ukrainian farms as an example of what a dictator with a little ambition can do if he really wants to destroy his own nation. By the time Mengistu fled Ethiopia earlier this year, his scheme had wiped out at least 35,000 traditional villages, thus eliminating a food-growing and -trading system that had helped Ethiopians weather droughts and plagues for centuries. He replaced these villages with 15,000 new and presumably improved villages—but they were in areas that had never been able to provide enough food to sustain the people who lived there even before villagization. Mengistu coupled this disastrous

move with an even more devastating agricultural policy that taxed farmers' income at more than 80 percent, allowed soldiers to confiscate livestock and mandated the destruction of crops and grain stores. Famine was the only harvest.

By the ruler's reckoning, his program was a success; a restive population was rendered too weak to fight, and his power was, for a time, made secure. His reign of hunger lasted nearly a decade and a half. It was not a secret. Yet no one lifted a hand to stop it.

Even though Mengistu has been in exile since his ouster last May, he left behind a volatile complex of regional and tribal conflicts. The current truce is likely to be a transient thing. Even now, hundreds of thousands of sick, wounded or starving demobilized soldiers, the victims of peace, are wandering the countryside, wishing they still had homes to return to. When the next famine begins, you'll think it was only yesterday that the dying ended. And you'll be right.

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Imagine your state motor-vehicle department regulating food growers and you have an idea of how bureaucracy can kill. In the case of African famine, the bureaucracy most concerned is the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. It is the largest of the UN's autonomous organizations, and since its founding in 1945, it has spent nine billion dollars trying to end the world's hunger. Through its World Food Program, it also seeks to meet sudden food emergencies. Unfortunately, it doesn't work.

For the past decade and a half or so, the F.A.O.'s director-general, a Lebanese named Eduoard Saouma, has been irritating the large donor nations by running his bureaucracy

with the same attention to personal power that marked the regime of, say, Mengistu in Ethiopia. When Saouma exits his limousine and enters the F.A.O. offices, his staffers must stand. He likes to be called Your Excellency and he travels regally, expecting fully to be treated as a head of state, the King of Groceries. Saouma's salary for his six-year term: at least $1,200,000, including expenses. He controls a multimillion-dollar fund, for which accounting is murky, at best. His excess of *hubris* so mightily offended the Western delegates that the Canadians mounted an effort to oust him when he stood for re-election to a third six-year term in 1987. According to diplomatic sources, Saouma was able to dodge that bullet through a cleverly planned effort to dole out favors—courtesy of the fund—to disaffected voter nations.

In any case, the real criticisms of Saouma center on how his massive ego clogs the relief pipelines and prompts many donors to bypass the F.A.O. The fiasco that led to his attempted ouster occurred at the height of the Ethiopian famine of 1984, when 5,000,000 people were on the verge of starvation. Hunger was killing them off at the rate of about 2300 a day, and the Ethiopian government made an emergency appeal for aid. That request ran afoul of a long-simmering battle between Saouma and his colleague James Ingram, director of the World Food Program; their squabbles have crippled the UN's relief apparatus. A source in the F.A.O. contends that Ingram inexplicably stalled for several days before granting a transfer of 30,000 tons of supplies, but then Saouma refused to sign off on the shipment. He was annoyed, apparently, because an Ethiopian official had gone to his rival Ingram first. The battle raged for days and days as the death toll mounted. Finally, when Saouma's whims had been entertained and the Ethiopian official had been recalled by his government, the food was released. According to one 20-year veteran of the F.A.O., the price of his pique was more than 45,000 Ethiopian lives.

The Eduoard Saoumas of the world occupy all levels of the relief bureaucracy. Entire governments tailor policies to make it more difficult and more expensive to feed their starving citizens than it would be to, say, sell the government arms. Just as the death camps can be considered a political expedient, so can food aid. Last year, the al-Bashir government in the Sudan sold off all its emergency food reserves to buy arms and oil, and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army continues to seize relief shipments and sell the food or use it to feed soldiers.

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You can't get very far into this discussion without running into the perennial figure in African affairs: racism. It cuts two ways.

First is the obvious one. Imagine that what's going on in, say, the Sudan were going on in Norway. Or the Soviet Union. The outcry would be universal and the Western world would circle its grain wagons to help. Obviously, not all lives on this planet have equal worth, and those in Africa seem cheap, indeed.

But racism cuts another way as well: Call it affirmative action for despots. Common sense tells you that for every FREE SOUTH AFRICA—END APARTHEID bumper sticker, there ought to be another reading FEED ETHIOPIA—DOWN WITH MENGISTU. But the truth is that while any bozo can tell an evil white South African from a virtuous black one, trying to figure out who the good and bad black guys are in Africa is a tricky business. For 30 years, a numbing succession of little Hitlers have marched in and out of power there while the rest of the world did nothing. The result? Far, far more dead people under postcolonial tyrants than during all the African colonial wars put together. That they have been allowed to remain in power for so long is sorry evidence of a repugnant form of racial bias. After six decades of colonialism and three of postcolonial terror, Africans are still dying for a fair shot at rational self-government.

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Around the corner from racism is its neighbor in the social sciences: economics. In the context of Africa, economics is a subject unnecessarily complicated by curves, graphs and numbers. There is one simple number to know: 1.7 percent. That's the share of the world's trade that belongs to that vast continent, and a substantial amount of that share belongs to South

Africa. Money talks. Africans walk.

The situation in Africa is exacerbated by the grasping policies of the hardest-hit countries. A common gambit is to exchange relief supplies for hard currency, which in turn is spent on weapons or stashed away in the leader's foreign bank account. Often, the food sent to feed people is hoarded by the wealthy and powerful and offered at a price so high the hungry cannot afford to buy it.

The rags-to-riches exploits of African politicians color the economic picture in Africa simply because we in the West like to help those who help themselves. Mobutu, Mugabe, Moi, Kaunda may all be charlatans when it comes to fair government, but they're the real thing when it comes to stable trading partners.

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When famines are announced, weeks, months may pass while donor countries, P.V.O.s (private voluntary organizations) and N.G.O.s (nongovernmental organizations) solicit donations and food. Then, suddenly, tremendous amounts of relief supplies are mustered, clogging the seaports and flooding the capitals. If all the hungry people in Africa lived in the capital cities, everybody would eat.

But they don't. So the biggest practical problem fighting famine is the prosaic logistical one: How do you get food from where it is to where it isn't?

There's something about the Nile that loves a barge, and it's this: From Khartoum south to Equatoria and the headwaters of the Nile, there are two ways of moving goods and people. One is by air, a costly proposition and, for most Sudanese, a highly unlikely one. The other is by barge—large, wide, flat-bottomed jobs that glide across the huge southern swamp like an angel from heaven's larder.

So if you're a relief worker in Khartoum, contemplating the impossibility of getting food to the south, and you realize there are no roads, no bridges, no trucks (and if there were, the military would have permanent dibs on them), sooner or later, the idea will occur to you: Let's load up a barge and float relief up the river.

That's just what they tried to do last year in the village of Bor, where Red Cross staffers supervised workers laboring to assemble a brand-new barge donated by Norwegians, flown in pieces to Nairobi and hauled across the border into the Sudan to run relief.

Alas, nobody asked the Sudanese government if it would grant permission for the new, bigger boat—which, of course, it wouldn't. When observers, including a chap from *The Washington Post*, went to see what the problem was, they found the barge slowly rusting away, aground on the shoals of bureaucracy and paranoia.

The stalled barge tells you all you need to know about African transport. Any vehicle that can travel efficiently from one place to another comes under immediate suspicion of harboring weapons or soldiers, and thus becomes a military target. Moreover, much of the continent is just plain impassable.

Throughout Africa, a valuable heritage of colonial infrastructure has been wasted. In Zaire, there were 90,000 miles of passable road when it declared independence in 1960. Twenty-five years later, there were fewer than 6000 left.

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There is an especially despicable group of middle-range government officials, army officers and foreign-aid functionaries who grow fat off the world's efforts to feed the starving. The World Bank calls them the Vampire Elite, and they are recognizable from the Mercedeses they park in front of their mansions in the capital cities of the most godforsaken countries on earth.

A Dutch relief worker in Kenya told

me that if assistance is funneled through the typical African government, as much as 80 percent of it will be unaccounted for. So much aid goes into so many government pockets that many nations avoid the official channels. This year's $23,000,000 in U.S. aid to Zaire, for example, will go only to nongovernmental organizations, because corruption in official agencies has become so rife.

If the Vampire Elite are the parasites, then private charities are the fattened beasts upon which they feed.

It is, perhaps, only to be expected that bureaucracies built to respond to famine often feed on it. These days, it's one of Africa's few growth industries: In 1988, there were nearly 100,000 relief and development workers in Africa. Private organizations churn huge amounts of cash pushing frequent famine programs—or, as one analyst told me, "No famine, no money"—then squander their resources on schemes that duplicate those of their competitors, resulting in phenomenal waste. Intoxicated with the fever of urgency, they are often highly adept at responding to emergencies but unable to deal with the conditions—especially the political ones—that create famine. To do so effectively would only alienate the very governments whose acquiescence is required for relief programs to proceed. It is a malignant alliance when those who fight famine are dependent for their existence upon those who cause it.

Also, there is often virtually no formal integration between the very groups that should be working together: the nongovernmental and private voluntary relief efforts. During the last big famine in the Sudan, in 1985 and 1986, there were more than 90 nongovernmental organizations at work in Khartoum, each providing field jobs for a growing mob of disaster specialists, stimulating a false economy and generating enormous profits for truckers, contractors and other famine entrepreneurs.

The result is a highly inefficient relief industry—something that people, asked again and again to give, eventually notice. The by-product is a sense of futility that serves no one.

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Which would you rather read about?

A. Economic cycles

B. Government deficits

C. Savings-and-loan scandals

D. Famine

E. None of the above

According to members of the media, E is the answer we all would give, because they believe that these subjects are impossible for normal people to understand.

Consequently, famine is covered in shorthand—highly charged paragraphs read to the camera by a journalist clad in khaki. The piece will usually start with an emblematic shot of, say, Abdul, who has brought his family down from the mountains, his children starving, his wife sick, his cow dead, as if the only way we comprehend the horror of famine is by imagining ourselves in Abdul's place.

That's ridiculous, of course, because it's impossible. It also assumes that it is only the horror of famine that we need to understand. And that's where the trouble starts. Famine is invariably covered as a crisis that begs for a solution, that can be ameliorated with big infusions of food and money. As soon as the food arrives, as soon as the war ends, as soon as the rain falls, the famine ends—or, to be exact, the media's interest in it ends. But famine is only the most dramatic symptom of a much larger process that involves economics, racism, history, bureaucrats—all the components of a real-world problem.

What do those hungry children think is happening when some guy shoves a million-dollar video camera into their faces? During one recent CNN segment, a woman asked the camera why they had been sent video crews but no food. It is in the camps that we see the *results* of an event that, had there been a reporter handy, would have been the real news.

That brings us to famine fatigue. If famine is a man-made disaster, famine fatigue is a media-made one. Unsure of how to report on an issue as complex as famine, the media hope that startling images and startling numbers will do their jobs for them. Consequently, we are no longer shocked at the look on a baby's face moments before it dies of hunger, and pictures of the endless swarm of refugees shuffling around in the desert fail to touch us.

But if the faces are hideous, so are the numbers. The number of those "threatened by famine," to use the vague phraseology of the UN, changes almost daily in an apparent struggle to find an arbitrary figure that will grab the public imagination.

Until last summer, the United Nations said 27,000,000 people in Africa were at risk of starving this year. Then, in June, the UN upped the ante to a round 30,000,000. For most of us, those are not real numbers. Fortunately, 30,000,000 isn't a real number to the UN, either. Thirty million people did not starve in Africa this year. The number who actually died of famine in Africa may be as low as a mere 1,000,000 or so. The UN must assume that 1,000,000 deaths—a mere 1,000,000—are just not enough to make us notice. Like famine relief agencies, the UN—and, for that matter, the press—has a need to take a big famine and make it bigger, as big as it can possibly be. That's marketing. That's showbiz.

The beauty part is, you can make the famine as big as you want. The bad part is, it's impossible to tell how big it really is. The really bad part is, the media never question the bloated figures offered by UN bureaucracies. Consequently, it's hard for us to know what to do to fight the present famine and prevent the occurrence of the next one.

•

So there's famine again in Africa. What can be done to help?

On some cold and rational level, doing nothing may make the most sense. As we've learned in this country, setting up a massive, permanent welfare structure perpetuates poverty. But after all the pictures on TV and all the pleading mail, most of us feel we must do something.

Our first instinct—sending huge infusions of food—may be the wrong thing. Large-scale relief can destroy a local agricultural economy. Famines get meanest just before harvest, so just about the time all the hard-working farmers in, say, Somalia get ready to take their paltry crops in—presto!—the world community dumps tons and tons of free food, ruining the market, driving farmers from the land and into the cities for jobs, and making next season's famine worse.

Relief—that is, the immediate, airlift-style remedies necessary for treating famine—is distinct from development, which focuses on the long-term solutions that seek to prevent famine in the first place. Development programs clearly hold out the most promise, but what sort work best?

• Agricultural programs have the best chance of succeeding. Those areas in Africa subject to repeated famine have to recapture their agrarian base. Organizations bent on creating T-shirt factories in Ethiopia are wasting their time and your money. Africa's future is in its soil.

• Development programs must be seen by recipients as an extension of an already existing system. The entire history of Western development in Africa is crowded with grand, innovative projects that should have worked but, in fact, went bust as soon as the

*(concluded on page 160)*

*"And then, at night, when they're all asleep, you sneak down, unlock the door and. . . ."*

*modern living* By HARRY SOMERFIELD

# P·L·A·Y·B·O·Y·'S ELECTRONIC ROUNDUP

## get the popcorn popping and grab a spot on the couch. home, these days, is where the entertainment is

IF LIFE IMITATES ART, then the art of technology strives to imitate life. From stereo sound in the Fifties to color television in the Sixties to digital audio in the Eighties, engineers and designers have been coming up with bigger and better ways to make your home-entertainment experience as exciting as any live performance.

In fact, industry insiders predict that shortly after the turn of the century, a painting or even a patterned wall will dissolve into a television screen. Eventually, they claim, these life-size screens will be replaced by three-dimensional, holographic images, which will be beamed into the center of a room by a small, light-fixture-sized projector mounted on the ceiling or the wall.

As visual images get larger, you can expect storage systems to get smaller. Somewhere down the road, tiny, solid-state microchips will take the place of today's state-of-the-art audio and video optical-disc systems. To watch a classic film from the Nineties, you'll just mentally make a selection from an on-screen menu, speak the alpha-numeric code aloud and an international fiber-optic system will download the movie into a storage module for later viewing. The entire procedure will take less than 15 seconds. If the film is purged from memory within 24 hours, a world-wide computer billing network will automatically change the charge from a "film purchase" to a "film rental." Sound farfetched? Not really. These super-high-tech gadgets are currently on the drawing boards of some of the world's leading electronic firms. Meanwhile, you'll have to be content with the latest high-tech gizmos on the market now. Here are some of our favorites.

### THE COMMAND CENTER

The receiver is the heart and soul of any home-entertainment system. A top audio/video receiver will have multiple jacks for a TV set or a tuner, several VCRs, a laser-disc player and a CD player, plus Dolby Pro Logic Surround Sound processors. The last on-board circuitry allows movie sound tracks that are encoded in Surround Sound to be reproduced at home exactly as they are in movie theaters, often with at least five channels of amplification.

Pioneer's VSX-D1S ($1350) and Yamaha's RX-V1050 ($1200) are two excellent audio/video receivers to consider, along with Kenwood's KR-V9030 ($980), Onkyo's TX-SV70 ($850) and Yamaha's RX-V850 ($800).

### THE BIG PICTURE

Do you think more is more when it comes to big-screen TVs? Not unless you have a living room, bedroom or den that's the size of a football field and a budget to match. Instead, consider a *(text continued on page 176)*

**PIONEER MULTI CD/LD PLAYER** There are several combination CD/laser-disc players on the market, but only Pioneer's CLD-M90 accepts both formats at the same time. Priced at $700, the CLD-M90 comes with a ten-key remote control and features a unique tray that stores as many as five compact discs for continued or programed play. Once the CDs are in place, a 12-inch laser disc can be loaded on top. Although the CLD-M90 is a single-sided laser-disc player, you can program it to play as many as 24 chapters, in any order, on either side of the disc. That way, you can skip the dull stuff and go directly to your favorite scenes.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES IMBROGNO

**MARANTZ DCC/ANALOGUE DECK** One of the most promising new formats is the Digital Compact Cassette (DCC). Although it won't hit the market until spring, virtually all of the major record labels have agreed to support the format, as have several electronics firms, including Marantz, maker of the prototype DCC player/recorder shown above. Priced between $500 and $700, DCC decks will also play analogue cassettes.

## SEGA GAME GEAR

When Sega's Game Gear debuted in Japan in 1990, more than 40,000 units were sold in only two days. Backed by a $15,000,000 ad campaign, the video game giant is hoping to make an even greater impact here. With Nintendo and TurboGrafx also vying for a slice of the one-billion-dollar handheld-video-game market, competition is going to be stiff. But Game Gear, with its 3.2-inch color screen and stereo sound, is priced between the two at $150 (including the hit game Columns). An optional TV tuner is available for $120 and other Game Gear software, while not compatible with Sega's Genesis system, costs $30 to $40.

## MAGNAVOX CD INTERACTIVE TELEVISION

If the makers of CD-I (Compact Disc Interactive) have their way, couch potatoes will soon be more active. Codeveloped by Philips and Sony, this new interactive compact disc–based home-entertainment/educational system combines digital audio with video, text, graphics and animation. The first CD-I player (the $1400 Magnavox CDI910 shown above) debuts this fall, along with software, including *Caesars World of Gambling* (shown on the screen of RCA's new $500 20-inch color TV), *ABC Sports Golf: Palm Springs Open* and *Treasures of the Smithsonian*, a self-guided tour of 150 of the institution's major attractions.

**NAKAMICHI BOOKSHELF** Apparently, good things do come in small packages. Nakamichi, Panasonic, Sony, Aiwa and Sharp are among the many companies that are packing the power of a typical rack system into compact, bookshelf-sized stereo units. Nakamichi's $350 CompactReceiverSystem1 and $450 CD-CassettePlayer1 (both shown above) incorporate color coding and specially shaped buttons to simplify operations. Included with the 14-watt-per-channel receiver is a pair of two-way bass reflex speakers and a pocket-sized wireless remote control that mirrors the design of the system.

These days, you don't have to be Steven Spielberg to create videos with dazzling special effects. Just get your hands on one of the newest home video-editing systems. Panasonic's $1800 WJ-AVE5 Digital A/V Mixer (shown above) has been rated one of the best of the breed, and it doesn't take a master's in film to operate. Ninety-six wipe patterns let you create scene changes like a pro. A digital synchronizer mixes video images from any two sources, such as a VCR, a camcorder or a laser-disc player. And a built-in audio mixer accepts as many as three stereo inputs, plus a microphone. You can also create jazzy special effects: The STILL function freeze-frames an image, MOSAIC turns it into tiny squares, STROBE makes it flash and PAINT adds vivid colors. **PANASONIC DIGITAL A/V MIXER**

**SONY Hi8 HANDYCAM** Camcorders are another example of home electronics gear that keeps getting smaller. Sony recently unveiled its first Hi8 model in the TR series, the $1500 CCD-TR81 Handycam, which weighs in at a mere one pound, 12 ounces (without tape and battery), and fits neatly into the palm of your hand. In addition to delivering 400 lines of horizontal resolution, the Handycam boasts a newly developed lens system with full-range auto-focus, an 8:1 variable-power zoom lens that switches from telephoto to side angle in three seconds and lifelike sound reproduction via a built-in four-capsule stereo microphone. And a variable high-speed shutter ensures sharp images during fast action. Once you've shot your footage, you can hook the Handycam up to your television set for immediate playback. Other camcorders to consider include Panasonic's PV-21 Palmcorder (about $1000) and JVC's GR-SX90 VideoMovies ($1200). Both of these VHS models weigh less than two pounds and are loaded with features.

*"'Not only do women go to strip bars, they go to strip bars and act like animals.'"*

*how dumb do you think I am?* I wanted to do that, but I didn't. I didn't do it because I was afraid. Clearly and palpably afraid.

Rachel burped demurely. "Anyway," she continued, "what I mean is, what is it with men? No offense, David, I don't mean you. I mean men in, you know, general."

Lesley snorted and said, "God, Rachel, you don't have a clue, do you?"

"Pardon me?"

"I'm serious, honey. Don't you know by now? Haven't you figured it out? Watch this." She turned to me, stared me straight in the eyes and said, "Hey, Dave, we're lying our asses off. We're not cocktail waitresses. We're dancers. Nude dancers." Without taking her eyes off mine, she reached for her beer.

I was clearly being outcooled here, plain and simple. But to save face, I performed a not very convincing shrug and said, "I'd figured as much."

Lesley sent a current of venom my way. "What's that supposed to mean?"

Changing strategies, I stammered, "I saw you guys Friday night. You were walking into Bottoms Up with your work clothes under your arms." I let this sink in in full anticipation of their amazement: A conjurer in our midst! But only Rachel evidenced the slightest twitch of surprise. I charged forward: "When you said you cocktail-waitressed at a strip bar, I thought, Now, why would a strip bar hire cocktail waitresses when they already have strippers?"

Actually, this piece of logic had only just occurred to me.

"Well," Lesley informed me, "sorry to burst your bubble, Sherlock, but there *are* cocktail waitresses at Bottoms Up. Have you ever been to a strip joint?"

"Sure," I said, imagining with satisfaction how nimbly this admission would slip through a lie-detector test. What I mean is, it was true: One night in college, I went to a topless place called Charley's with some buddies. We were doing some male bonding. We'd also, prior to entering, done a fair number of bong hits in a friend's car. I remember a woman in crotch-high cutoffs writhing on stage to a song called *Rock You Like a Hurricane*. I also remember throwing up an order of potato skins in one of Charley's graffiti-infested stalls.

"So why'd you go?" Rachel asked. Lesley was sitting back and smiling into space.

"It was something to do." Which wasn't too far from the truth.

"But why a strip bar?" Rachel wanted to know. "What's the big deal about seeing naked boobs?"

I gave the question some serious thought. I wanted to let them know I was above bourgeois morality, above archaisms like sin and decency. Besides, the question was an interesting one: What *was* the big deal?

"Well, it's not just the naked, er, chest," I told her. "I mean, let's face it: A boob's a boob. That's not it at all. I think what guys get off on is the fact that they are watching a woman take off all her clothes in a room packed with other men. It's like, I've been in restaurants or whatever and a woman will walk in, and from out of nowhere, this little voice will say, 'I wonder what she looks like naked.' You know the voice I'm talking about? It's the same one that says, 'I wish I had a million dollars' or 'I'd like to punch this guy in the teeth.' So when you're at a strip bar, it's like that woman you're looking at hears what you are thinking and says, 'You really want to know? OK, I'll show you.' Which is pretty mind-boggling, if you think about it."

Boy, I was rolling now; man, oh, man, was this *interesting*.

"I mean, this woman you don't even know is going to undress for you," I continued. "And why? Because you want to know what her body looks like. You and all the other people in the bar. And because you've *paid* her to take her clothes off, which, of course, is another thing: the *money*. If it were free, it wouldn't be nearly as interesting."

"Same goes for cocaine," Lesley said, laughing.

Rachel shook her head but didn't say anything. Was she impressed? Did she admire my critical acumen? Was she aroused by my liberal openness?

"Well," Rachel said, "all I know is, women don't do that stuff."

"Oh, yes, they do," Lesley disagreed.

"OK, right, they do. But they're not as bad as men."

"Not as bad as men?" Lesley repeated. "Are you kidding me? You can't be serious. Where have you been? Women, honey, are *worse* than men. Worse by a mile." She was sitting up now with her new beer, as if to create a space around her. Implicitly, Rachel and I diminished ourselves, giving her room. "Honey, not only do women go to strip bars, they go to strip bars and act like *animals*. Have you ever been to one of those places? *Have* you? It's a goddamned orgy in there. Women hoist up their dresses, flatten themselves on tables, suck cock right there with the whole crowd cheering them on. Something clicks in their brains, I don't know, they just go ape shit, like they've never seen a dick before."

Rachel and I looked at Lesley in amazement.

"You're full of shit," I said tentatively. And yet, I was almost willing to buy it. Who was I to say her nay? Me? Hardly.

"Full of shit?" she said, though without malice. She was clearly enjoying herself. Addressing me, she said, "Let me tell you something: Women are *worse* than men when it comes to fucking. Period. We think about it more, talk about it more, have dirtier mouths, can do it longer—you name it. And let me tell you something else: Deep down, you *know* it, bub. You know it and it scares the shit out of you."

She let this hang for a second. No one argued. "For instance, take some chick whose husband can't get it up when *she* wants to fuck. If she lets him know *she* wants it, if she reaches under the covers and grabs his prick, what do you think happens? The guy's as limp as Jell-O. It's like, I don't know, she's *out of control* or something. So you take this chick and you put her in a room full of chicks like her, all of them fed up with handing it out to some asshole who thinks he's the only dick in town, and all of a sudden, out comes this sexy piece of ass, all muscles and buns, and what does he do but strip down to black undies and a bow tie. And the thing is, he doesn't do it because he wants to fuck these chicks, though, for all I know, he might; the point is, he does it because these chicks *want* him to do it. He's doing it because they've *paid* him to do it. That's what it all comes down to. They're getting it exactly when *they* want it. Which, in real life, never happens—not in *my* life, at least."

Here she stopped, her words hovering in the air. No one knew what to say, least of all me. It was probably my place to object, I don't know; maybe Lesley was just "playing" with me again. Nevertheless, I felt . . . oh, six inches tall, give or take an inch.

"OK, now, do you guys want to know a secret?" She was smiling now, dissolving the tension. Boy, did this girl know how to command a room. "Remember how I said I once saw a woman in one of those places give a stripper a blow job?"

We nodded, Rachel and I. No arguments here.

*(continued on page 168)*

# BERNARD and HUEY

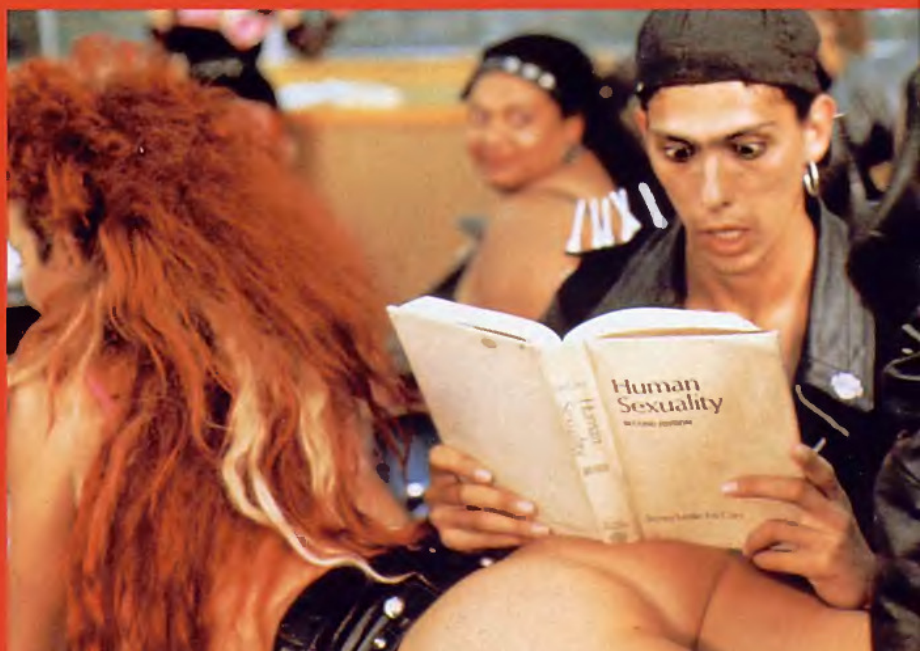
# Sex in Cinema 1991

## Double Dare

"I'm an artist, and this is how I choose to express myself," proclaims Madonna in the startlingly candid documentary *Truth or Dare*. Music-video director Alek Keshishian shadowed the star during her Blond Ambition tour, filming such graphic moments as this steamy version of *Like a Virgin*.

# NC-17 RATING? WHAT NC-17 RATING?

**TEXT BY BRUCE WILLIAMSON** AS LAST YEAR drew to a close, it seemed that things were looking up, *Sex in Cinema*–speaking. Making a major shift in the rating system it had often, and loudly, defended, the Motion Picture Association of America deep-sixed the abhorred X and introduced the NC-17 rating (no children under 17 admitted). At last, critics rejoiced, a distinction could be made between outright sleaze and tasteful erotica. Movies could now be made for and marketed to an adult audience; no *(text continued on page 148)*


Human
Sexuality

## FUNNY BUSINESS

Sex is a laughing matter in this, er, sextet of current cinematic outings (clockwise from top left, opposite). In *The Naked Gun 2½: The Smell of Fear*, inept gumshoe Frank Drebin (Leslie Nielsen), in hot pursuit of a suspect, blunders his way through a sex shop's moritol-oids display. A fantasy sequence from *He Said, She Said* features Sharon Stone and her ex-lover (Kevin Bacon) consulting a marriage manual—which appears to contain a bit of clever product placement by a blender manufacturer. Before a disaster that befalls the British royal family turns him into the monarch of all he surveys in *King Ralph*, John Goodman is a simple night-club entertainer who enjoys a ringside view as much as the next guy. *Class of Nuke 'Em High Part II: Subhumanoid Meltdown* brings us Louis Ortiz propping his sex-ed text up on a compliant Wendy Burnell in a scene that in no way resembles the study hall at our alma mater. In a switch on the *Green Card* plot, the French film *Does This Mean We're Married?* has an American woman (Patsy Kensit) contract a marriage to a Frenchman (Stephane Freiss) as a way to gain needed residency documents. *Do or Die*, Andy and Arlene Sidaris' campy *hommage* to *The Most Dangerous Game*, features, among a multiplicity of action scenes, a torrid tryst between Michael Shane and bosomy dancer Stephanie Schick.

## BLACK POWER

This may go down as the year in which Hollywood finally discovered the potential of black film makers—who, of course, had already discovered sex. In Mario Van Peebles' *New Jack City* (left), Allen Payne and crack merchant Wesley Snipes ignore the gyrations of Tracy Camilla Johns. Snipes, this time as an architect, and Annabella Sciorra, overcome by interracial passion, do it on the drafting table in Spike Lee's *Jungle Fever* (below); and in Bill Duke's *A Rage in Harlem* (bottom), Robin Givens skillfully manipulates a toe in the seduction of mamma's boy Forest Whitaker.

## SIN IS IN

There's a whole lotta misbehavin' gain' an in these 1991 pictures papulated by bad guys and gals af all persuasions. Jasan Patric allaws Rachel Ward ta invalve him in a kidnap plot in *After Dark, My Sweet* (appasite, far left), while Val Kilmer as racker Jim Marrison flashes a rawdy audience in *The Daars* (appasite, belaw). *The Rapture* (appasite, near left) takes Mimi Ragers—she's the one wha's clothed—fram graup grapes (here with David Duchavny and Stephanie Nenuez) ta religiaus fundamentalism ta human sacrifice. In *The Grifters*—like *After Dark, My Sweet*, taken from a baok by the late pulp navelist Jim Thampson—*everybody*'s on the can. In the scene at left above, Annette Bening affers her landlard (Michael Laskia) a rent-maney aptian: "The lady ar the laat?" she inquires with a leer. Theresa Russell practices the oldest profession in directar Ken (no kin) Russell's latest picture, *Whare* (abave right). Saan after the L.A. palitician played by William Katt in *Naked Obsession* gets invalved in kinky extramarital sex with stripper Maria Ford (belaw), he's set up as a suspect in her murder.

## BACK FROM THE BODY SHOP

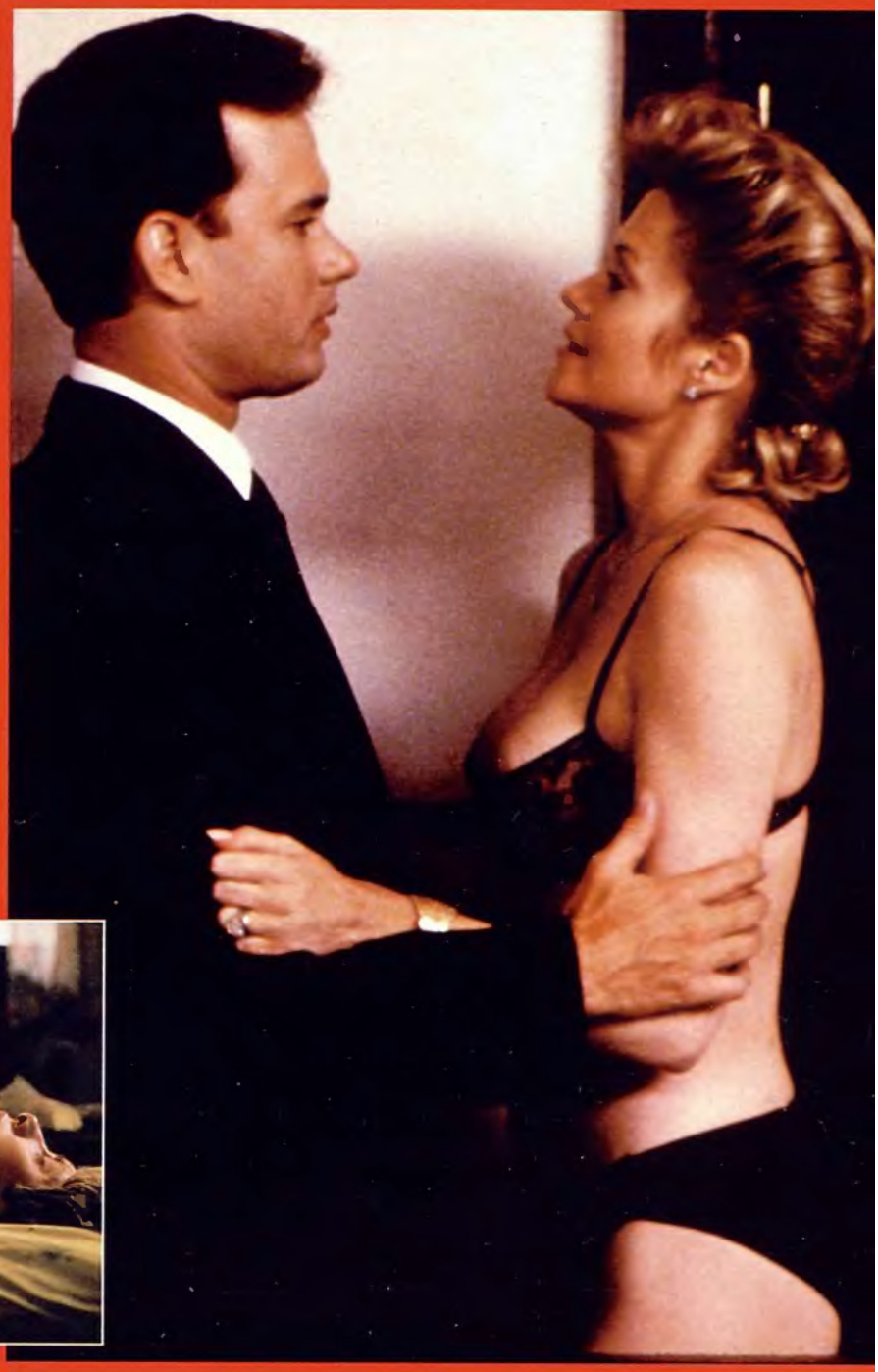
Author H. P. Lovecraft's mad scientist Herbert West returns in *Bride of Re-Animator* to create a femole monster (Kathleen Kinmont, in a special-effects mix of spare anatomical parts, left). *Paris Is Burning* is a poignant film about Harlem's gay balls and the men—some of them transvestites and transsexuals—who frequent them. To create her movie, directar Jennie Livingston spent many months documenting parties like the one below.

## STRAIGHT TO THE TAPE

On the page apposite, a trio of sexpot-boilers headed directly for video stores. *Playboy* pictorial fove Shoron Stone ond Chris Rydell play the seductress ond the bullfighter in yet another remake of the classic *Blood and Sand* (top left); previous matodors, film buffs will recall, were Rudolph Volentino and Tyrone Power. *Night Eyes* (center left) teams Andrew Stevens and Tanya Roberts in o *Body Heat* clone. The bayou-bosed *Zandalee* (near left) stors Judge Reinhold as the luckless mate of hot-to-trot Erika Anderson, who fools oround with Nicolas Cage.

## BIG ON VID

Sometimes, o mojor motion picture does better with America's home-video audience than it does in theoters. Three cases in point: *The Bonfire of the Vanities* (right), orguobly 1990's most miscast movie, which this yeor brings Tom Hanks and Melanie Griffith into your living room; *White Palace* (below), in which Suson Sorondon teaches James Spoder everything he ought to know about orol sex; and the first NC-17 film, *Henry & June* (bottom), with Maria de Medeiros and Richard E. Grant as Henry Miller's lover, diorist Anois Nin, and spouse Hugo Guiler.



## THE GREENAWAY EFFECT

Moviegoers can always count on British director Peter Greenaway to be creative—and outrageous. His *Drowning by Numbers* (above) was made in 1987 but released in the U.S. only this year. Its plot calls for three generations of women named Cissie Colpitts to drown their husbands. Dowager Joan Plowright dispatches hers (Bryan Pringle) after catching him bathing with a local slut (top right); Juliet Stevenson helps hers, Trevor Cooper (they're together, top left), expire in the ocean; and Joely Richardson offs hers (David Morrissey) in a swimming pool. That's Morrissey, Cooper and Richardson above. Due this fall is Greenaway's *Prospero's Books*, based on Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and starring Sir John Gielgud (near right). As evidenced by the shots on the page opposite, the film delights in nudity and gamesmanship (Isabelle Pasco, as Prospero's daughter, Miranda, plays a game of chess with Mark Rylance as Ferdinando, far right).

longer, the theory went, must they be pruned to the level of suitability for teeny-boppers.

Alas, the jubilation was premature. The Reverend Donald Wildmon, the crusading ayatollah of the arts whose American Family Association mans the barricades against prurience, and other self-anointed censors attacked the NC-17 with the same fervor they'd previously devoted to the X. Declaring "a cultural war," Wildmon promised, "It's just getting started."

For whatever reason—fear of Wildmon and Company or merely the simple fact that it takes time to get a picture into the pipeline—no major company has released an NC-17 film since Universal's 1990 *Henry & June*, the movie that started it all. As a result, all that 1991's cinematic fare may end up proving is that the more things change, the more they stay the same. Although the M.P.A.A. has rerated a good many previously X'd attractions, some newspapers continue to ban advertising of NC-17 films, past or present. Also, Blockbuster Video, a nationwide chain, refuses to handle anything labeled porno or NC-17—quality be damned.

"That's where the next battle is going to be waged," declares Harvey Weinstein, a chief executive of Miramax Films, still smarting from his company's 1990 contretemps over the then-X-rated *Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!* and *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife & Her Lover*. Says Weinstein, "We are studying the fundamentalists, the Wildmon group or whoever it is putting pressure on Blockbuster . . . and we're contemplating action against them."

The embattled National Endowment for the Arts found itself in the line of fire again this year over its funding of an unrated movie called *Poison*. Although director Todd Haynes's rather innocuous shocker won the top prize at Utah's 1991 Sundance Film Festival, some audience members walked out well before the end. In fact, *Poison*, based on three works by France's dean of depravity, the late Jean Genet, is both boring and audacious. Its most offending segment, called "Homo," is about men in a squalid French prison, either dreaming about or actually experiencing erections, urination and nonexplicit but unmistakable anal sex.

The fact that censorship prevails may come as a surprise to audiences flocking to see Madonna's *Truth or Dare*. The semistaged documentary shot during her Blond Ambition tour shows the rock superstar simulating masturbation, copulation and oral sex (with an Evian bottle). Throughout, Madonna is unfazed, even when local authorities in Canada threaten her with arrest.

Although indulgently rated R, *Truth or Dare* has had its own run-ins with the M.P.A.A., which also rates advertising campaigns—including movie trailers. Those for *Truth or Dare* and *A Rage in Harlem*, both distributed by Miramax, ran into trouble with the M.P.A.A., and Weinstein has harsh words for its czar, Jack Valenti. "He's killing us," says Weinstein, echoing another company spokesman's claim that the M.P.A.A. observes a double standard, dealing more harshly with independents than with more powerful Hollywood studios.

Only moderately sexy, *A Rage in Harlem*'s trailer was originally red-banded (the equivalent of an R or an NC-17) because it included a scene in which a character wearing priestly clericals foils a mugger by pulling a pistol from a hollowed-out Bible. "Also, we showed Gregory Hines pointing a gun at Danny Glover, and the M.P.A.A. says a trailer can't show a weapon pointed at a victim. So now we have the gun pointed at Glover's dog. . . . I guess dogs are not considered victims." *Truth or Dare*'s trailer, also red-banded, depicts Madonna plucking the petals from a daisy while musing, "He just wants to (bleep) me." The bleep, Miramax notes, is easily lip-readable. "After the battle of the bleep," says Weinstein, "they [the raters] also thought some of Madonna's *Like a Virgin* footage was too suggestive. Even though the movie itself is an R film, we finally came out with an unrated trailer—which many theaters across the country won't show."

High-tech adventure, spiritual quests, romance and fantasy seemed to characterize most movies in the American mainstream circa 1991. It was, after all, the year in which Kevin Costner's *Dances with Wolves* won seven Oscars, while his *Robin Hood* became a box-office wow despite generally hostile press reaction (*and* a body double doing Kevin's sole nude scene). It was the year of *Terminator 2*, *City Slickers*, *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Backdraft*. Generally, though, the films most likely to jumpstart the gonads tended to be minor hits—or total flops that found their real audiences only on video. *Henry & June* (body heat ad infinitum), *White Palace* (Susan Sarandon and James Spader steaming the screen as an older woman–younger man combo) and *The Bonfire of the Vanities* (Tom Hanks as a married financier asking for trouble with Melanie Griffith in Brian De Palma's widely skewered version of the Tom Wolfe best seller) all seemed to attract viewers primed for take-home titillation. Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Sheltering Sky*, based on a Paul Bowles novel, was another instance of cerebral sex for private consumption—with Debra Winger and John Malkovich as a married couple sampling North Africa, drifting from his quickie with an Arab harlot to her stint as a desert nomad's sex toy.

*The Grifters*, directed by Stephen (*Dangerous Liaisons*) Frears, garnered Oscar nominations (but no statuettes) for Anjelica Huston and Annette Bening as ruthlessly bitchy rivals—respectively the mother and the mistress of a small-time con man (John Cusack)—mixed up in everything from petty larceny to incest and murder. Their mean streaks kept many a home fire sizzling.

*Switch*, director Blake Edwards' transsexual joke, also promises to score higher on the small screen than in theaters. Ellen Barkin plays the gender bender, returned to life as a woman after being murdered in his original incarnation as an indefatigable womanizer. Here's a guy who has to die to learn what he did for lust. *Soapdish*, a spoof of sudsy daytime TV, also looks likely to do better on video than it has been doing theatrically. As the upstart who yearns to replace veteran star Sally Field, Cathy Moriarty promises casting-couch favors to one harried executive (Robert Downey, Jr.). Get me the leading role, she vows, "and Mr. Fuzzy is *yours*." *The Marrying Man*, written by Neil Simon and touted as a main bout in the battle of the sexes, co-stars Kim Basinger and Alec Baldwin as a horny, frequently wed couple. The movie generated far more heat in the press than on screen when the not-so-private pair publicly blamed everyone but themselves for *Man*'s below-par performance.

More verbal than visual in its suggestiveness, *Sibling Rivalry* had a short career in theaters despite the popularity of star Kirstie Alley (of TV's *Cheers*) as a bored housewife with a lot of explaining to do when the stranger she picks up (Sam Elliott) drops dead of a heart attack, still wearing a condom after their fifth intimate encounter. He turns out to have been her long-absent brother-in-law, and his death takes most of the life—and nearly all of the sex—out of the movie.

Few major movies went overboard in prurience, opting instead for hints of hard-edged sexuality. The controversial *Thelma & Louise*, with Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis as gutsy runaways, sets its plot in motion with an attempted rape, but studio re-editing actually toned down a scene of joyous copulation between Davis and a no-good cowboy (Brad Pitt) who steals all the fugitives' money. *Mortal Thoughts*' Bruce Willis tries to rape his wife's best friend (played by his real wife, Demi Moore) in a sequence more violent than erotic. *The Rapture* (see

*(continued on page 166)*

# LOOK FOR A WEDGE AND A SPLASH, AND FIND THE HIDDEN PLEASURE IN REFRESHING SEAGRAM'S GIN.

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# JULIA ROBERTS

**hollywood's $7,000,000 woman on the mental states evoked by hair colors, her favorite bedtime story and how to live with sexual tension**

*The fastest transformation in recent Hollywood history changed Julia Roberts into* JULIA ROBERTS. *At 24, she is the hottest female property in all filmdom. Her performances in films such as "Satisfaction," "Mystic Pizza," "Steel Magnolias," "Pretty Woman" and "Flatliners" made audiences forget that she was Eric Roberts' little sister. Since we talked with her, she has worked on "Sleeping with the Enemy," "Dying Young" and the upcoming "Hook." Also, since then, a forest of trees has been sacrificed to the intricacies—real and imagined—of her love life. We were immediately impressed when we met her. She was funny, earnest and blunt. She also had bushels of hair and, of course, those lips and eyes that seem to be the first things other writers describe about her. We also discovered, for reasons that are not entirely clear, that she peels the crusts off her hamburger buns.*

**1.**

PLAYBOY: What are the advantages and the limitations of a drawl?

ROBERTS: It got me out of a traffic ticket once. I'd made an illegal left turn. I have a Georgia driver's license, so I said I'd been in Los Angeles for only nine days. The policewoman let me go because I did a real Southern number: [*sugary sweet*] "I'm here visiting my boyfriend and I'm lost and I'm late and I don't know what to do." The only drawback was when I first got to New York. Everyone would say, "Where are you from?" but I couldn't *hear* my accent. It was maddening. So I went to a speech class and said, "Cat. Dog. I'm go*ing* to the restaurant." In the movies, Southern accents are the most abused of all time.

There's such a variety, but people think if they go kinda country and sound like a hick that they've got it. *Steel Magnolias* is a perfect example. Just with the six main characters, there are three accents. Dolly Parton and Daryl Hannah have a lower-class rural sound, and Sally Field and I are upper middle class—it's a bit more rhythmic. Shirley MacLaine and Olympia Dukakis have the flowy, Vivian Leigh plantation accent.

**2.**

PLAYBOY: How seriously do you take movie reviews when it's obvious that the reviewer is infatuated with you?

ROBERTS: If you take the good reviews seriously, then you have to take the bad reviews seriously. I'm not usually aware of someone's feelings toward me, but I do remember one reviewer who described me as "pillowy-lipped." I don't know why he put so much thought into it, but it *did* seem like something you had to look for.

**3.**

PLAYBOY: Kim Basinger was the mouth of the Eighties; you've been touted by some fans as the lips of the Nineties. Do they ever get in the way? Have you ever hated your mouth? What's it like to put on your lipstick?

ROBERTS: "Lips of the Nineties," babe. Gotta be something. [*Laughs*] They've never gotten in the way. When they're your own lips, you don't really think about them. But there was a time in high school when I felt a little grief because I had an unusual mouth, unlike the other girls who had perfect mouths with little heart-top lips. But I never have done anything to accentuate my mouth. It's crooked and I have a couple of little scars. I never wear lipstick. In fact, I'm really bad at putting it on. Every time I've put it on, I've taken it off before I went out.

**4.**

PLAYBOY: We've seen you with blonde, red and black hair. What does only your hairdresser know for sure?

ROBERTS: My real hair color is kind of a dark blonde. Now I just have mood hair.

**5.**

PLAYBOY: Do different hair colors impart different kinds of mental states?

ROBERTS: Red hair gets a lot of attention. It's supposed to be this flaming, passionate thing. It makes me giddy.

**6.**

PLAYBOY: Does it make any sense to take your own shampoo to a hotel?

ROBERTS: Oh, no. I love hotel shampoo. One time, a girlfriend said, "Julia, I want my hair to be like yours. Your hair is so great. What kind of shampoo do you use?" I said, "Hotel shampoo." She said, "Oh? What hotel?"

**7.**

PLAYBOY: You gained weight to play Daisy in *Mystic Pizza*. What philosophic insights did you come away with about being robust in a thin-is-in world?

ROBERTS: Daisy was a voluptuous throwback to the days when the peak of sexy was to have the curves and the moves. I decided it would be kind of interesting if well executed. But at the time, I was flipping out. A big reason was that on page two of the script, it read, "Daisy Araujo, twenty-two, the kind of girl men would kill for." I would walk around the set and the crew would kid me. They'd say, "There's that girl men are going to kill for today." Now, how the fuck can you live up to that?

**8.**

PLAYBOY: Good question. Want to answer it?

ROBERTS: Can I tell you something funny about sex? I came to this grand revelation recently when a whole bunch of girlfriends and I were in the car. I said, "You *can* live without sex, you just can. You absolutely can sustain life without sex." And there was this real quiet in the car for about half a minute, and then my girlfriend says, "Yeah, you *can*, but why would you *want* to?"

Sexual tension is everywhere. I feel it and I support it. I don't partake of it all the time. If I had a meeting with ten men for a movie that I really wanted, the last thing I would think about is, do they find me attractive? I'm too busy trying to convince these people of the points I'm there trying to make. That's why I don't get that kind of stuff that you hear happens to actresses. You get what you give out, and maybe seven times out of ten, if that situation comes up, it's because somebody was giving off a funky energy that somebody else was picking up on and that person decided to seize the *(continued on page 156)*



PHOTOGRAPHY BY PHILLIP DIXON

# PLAYBOY COLLECTION

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES IMBROGNO

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Where & How to Buy on page 171.

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# JULIA ROBERTS

*(continued from page 151)*

moment. I don't ever put that out there unless it's a normal situation of trying to woo some guy.

**9.**

PLAYBOY: Is it true that for actors, it doesn't count on location?

ROBERTS: I disagree with that. I've always thought of location as an island and all you have is one another. So a lot of bonding goes on. But these things aren't always short term. I can say that, obviously, because I've done it. [*Irate*] We've *all* read the papers and know what I've done and haven't done. It's bizarre to deal with reports in the press about my romantic life. Why the fuck would anybody care? And when they completely fabricate something, it really blows your mind. I have seen years of my life summed up in five sentences. It sounds like it all took place over the course of a wild weekend. I've read flat-out lies so hideous they made me cry. But I stopped because I wasn't going to let those people get to me. [*Pauses*] I've seen so many actors—including myself—who've been tortured by having gone out with somebody they've worked with. And it doesn't matter if you go out with them for two years; people still call it a location romance. Give me a fucking break. Who am I going to go out with? I don't work at a pet store. So I dated someone I worked with. That was probably somebody I spent twenty hours a day with on a set for three months out of my life. Who am I going to know better? A person I had time to go out with twice in those three months? A complete relationship can last a week if you walk away with something that you don't forget, or something that moved you, or something that altered you. Ultimately, it just makes interesting lunch conversation on Mondays for people who are too eager to get the attention at the table. They want to be able to put in their two cents, so they come up with an interesting story. "Well, I just met Julia Roberts last week." "Really?" They get seven minutes of glory—and I get hurt.

**10.**

PLAYBOY: What are you still a fool for?

ROBERTS: In a setting with the right individual, I'm a fool for just about anything. I'm also totally gullible. If I'm told something, I'll believe it until it's proved otherwise. I would like to think that you *can* just do that: believe people.

**11.**

PLAYBOY: How did you prepare to play a prostitute in *Pretty Woman?*

ROBERTS: I met a lot of prostitutes. They have wonderful hopes for the future. [*Pauses*] They weren't nice *immediately.* A couple came on kind of strong and tough at first. But once I sprang for lunch and

took them to Del Taco, they seemed to be nice and talkative. I met enough to get a sense that a hooker is not what Joe Shmo imagines one to be. She could be the girl you're sitting next to on the bus.

**12.**

PLAYBOY: Your character, Vivian, dressed engagingly. Were you comfortable wearing an eight-inch leather skirt on Hollywood Boulevard?

ROBERTS: [*Laughs*] I took so much shit for that outfit. I know how to deal with any kind of attention that somebody's going to give to Julia Roberts. But the attention that Julia got as Vivian, standing on Hollywood Boulevard in that outfit, was not the kind of attention that I am used to or *prepared* to deal with. At one point, there were so many catcalls directed at me that I went back to my trailer and felt hideous. I just wanted to hide. Vivian's clothes were a thousand times more provocative than anything I'd have in my closet. I'm just not used to that kind of attention. Vivian would say, "Fuck you! Blow it out your ass!" to anyone who barked at her. I turn red and get hives.

**13.**

PLAYBOY: Describe your first love scene.

ROBERTS: I was *so* scared and nervous I felt like I was twelve years old and had never been kissed. I was pacing in my trailer. I thought I was going to throw up. Then I called my mom, and then I *did* throw up; and then I called my mom again. But it went very smoothly.

**14.**

PLAYBOY: Is there any scene in any of your films that you'd like to take back?

ROBERTS: There's only one scene I was embarrassed about that I was *supposedly* in. But I had the day off, so it was actually kind of funny. In *Satisfaction*, when I'm supposedly in the van with my boyfriend, the van is rocking. A grand amount of time passes by, as if we've been going at it for quite long. Actually, it was an *empty* van and there were a couple of grips behind it pushing it back and forth. I was at the beach all day. [*Laughs*]

**15.**

PLAYBOY: As a Georgia-to-New-York-to-Los-Angeles transplant, what had you heard about Hollywood that wasn't true?

ROBERTS: I heard, "Your agent is never your friend." It's a complete and total fucking piece-of-shit lie. I also heard that all producers are scum bags. Also untrue of the producers I've worked with. So everybody was wrong. But my brother told me something that *was* true: "You have to remember that this is show *business*, not show *friendship*."

**16.**

PLAYBOY: Rate Andrew Dice Clay's imitation of your brother.

ROBERTS: I saw it just once. It wasn't an imitation of Eric, though; it was an imitation of a character he did in *The Pope of Greenwich Village*, Paulie. Because I was expecting an imitation of Eric, it came and went so fast. It was very funny, but *everybody* imitates Paulie.

**17.**

PLAYBOY: Tell us your favorite bedtime story.

ROBERTS: A friend told me a story about Henry VIII. His sixth wife didn't want to die. Because he did not have a good track record, she decided to do something to secure her life. So every night, she told him half a story and she wouldn't tell him the other half until the next morning. When I heard this, I thought it was wonderful. My friend said, "So what do you think?" But instead of telling him, I said, "Once upon a time," and walked out.

**18.**

PLAYBOY: If someone were to break into your house, what wouldn't you want messed around with?

ROBERTS: I wouldn't want anyone to take any of my letters or pictures; anything that I had written. Things that I can't replace. They'll just fall into the hands of people who won't understand and who don't give a shit. They'll probably end up being thrown away. For instance, I have a letter from my daddy, the only letter that I managed not to lose as a child, that he wrote to me on July 6, 1977. If anybody ever took that away from me, I would just be destroyed. It doesn't mean anything to anybody else, yet I can read that letter ten times a day and it moves me in a different way every time.

**19.**

PLAYBOY: What's the most annoying cliché about actresses?

ROBERTS: That they are temperamental and have to be coddled and have to have their egos stroked. I guess you have to treat *some* people as if they were fragile. But speaking for myself, I don't need to be treated that way. I don't need to be treated *badly*; I don't need to be abused for the sake of a performance, because I'll *find* my performance. But I don't have to have people tiptoeing around me, either, trying not to hurt my feelings. If my performance is bad, the best thing you can do is tell me, and not in a cruel way, "That's not good."

**20.**

PLAYBOY: What should an actress always try to avoid?

ROBERTS: I'm always interested in the way people speak and what they speak about. Do they talk about politics, for instance? I never do, because I feel like it puts something between me and an audience. Like with Jane Fonda—and I'm mentioning her only because her picture is right on the wall in front of me—you can't help but watch her in a movie and at some point it will occur to you that she's either a workout queen or Hanoi Jane. Something's going to come into your head that will obstruct complete believability in what she's doing *right then*. So I try not to do that. It's hard enough to go to the movies and watch somebody, especially when you're in a lot of movies and more and more people know that you *are* Jessica Lange, that you *are* Sally Field. Anything that you can do to help the public get lost in a movie, the better off you are.

# Free at Last (continued from page 90)

*"'When I heard you posed, I knew why,' Michael said. 'To show that you're in control from now on.'"*

"Uh-huh." We were quiet for what seemed like a very long time, then he said, "I saw your pictures."

"What pictures?"

"*Your* pictures, La Toya."

"You couldn't have!"

"Well, I have them right here. And I'll prove it to you: OK, here you are with the snake . . . and here's one where you have on a white terrycloth bathrobe, and you have your finger up to your mouth, like you're saying 'Shhhh!'"

"My God, you *do* have them!"

"Yes," he said, laughing, "and I think they're great! Diana Ross thinks they're fabulous. You know, you're going to sell more copies than any other issue in *Playboy* history." That Michael, always concerned with sales records. Then he got serious.

"La Toya, you have to tell me why you did it. When I used to walk into your bedroom at home, if you were in your bra and teddy, you'd scream for Mother and throw things at me. And now you've posed. I think it's great, but I just can't believe you did it. Why?"

"Well. . . ."

"Wait! I'm going to tell *you* why you did it."

"Go ahead, Mike." I found this amusing. As perceptive as he was, how could he possibly know?

"OK," he said excitedly, like a detective solving a crime. "The first reason is, you did it to get back at Joseph, to let him know he can't tell you what to do; to tell him that you're grown now and can make your own decisions."

My jaw dropped.

"The second reason is that you want to get back at the religion."

"Oh, my God!" I gasped.

"Now, the third reason—I don't know if it's true or not—is that you wanted to get back at Mother, too. I hope that one isn't true, La Toya." But it is, I thought.

"I never told anyone any of this, Mike. How could you know what I was thinking?"

"I know," he said, "because that's why I wrote *Bad*. And that's why I wiggle the way I do and grab myself in that video and in *The Way You Make Me Feel*. It's to get back at Joseph, and tell them I can do what I want, and they can't control me. So when I heard you posed for *Playboy*, I knew why you did it. To show them, to tell them that you're in control from now on. And it will tell them, too. It will set them straight."

There was never any question in my mind that Michael had rebelled just as I had. From the first line of *Bad* or the video for *Leave Me Alone*, I'd seen a difference in the persona Michael chose to present to the world. He was more aggressive, no longer the victim.

While I believe my brother's videos are some of the best ever made, I'm at a loss to understand how someone who loves children as much as Michael does could produce entertainment that so graphically and relentlessly depicts violence. Take, for instance, the "Smooth Criminal" segment of his video *Moonwalker*. I can't watch without cringing the scene where the little girl is repeatedly kicked, slapped and stomped on. To me, that's not merely effective film making, that's a painful memory of life in my family.

In several of Michael's videos, intimacy is crushed by betrayal, anger, secrecy or persecution. Pain is always eluded by his becoming invincible, invisible, uncatchable or unbeatable; *it's every powerless child's fantasy*. What I find so telling, though, is that in so many of his works, Michael casts himself as a do-gooder. Yet no matter how admirable, his ends are inevitably accomplished through force or violence, as in "Smooth Criminal."

Months after our conversation, when I began thinking a lot about my family, I started interpreting my brother's work the same way he'd interpreted my appearing in *Playboy*. Equipped with words and images, he painted a far more explicit and—to me, at least—painful picture of growing up in the stifling and manipulative atmosphere of the Jackson family.

•

With the publication of my pictorial in the March 1989 issue of *Playboy*, I embarked on a promotional tour, appearing on virtually every major television program, including *Donahue* and *Late Night with David Letterman*. Of course, the first question was always, "What does your family think?" to which I honestly replied, "Some agree with it, some

don't." That proved to be the understatement of the year.

The issue hadn't been out more than a few days before my brother Jermaine went on TV's *Entertainment Tonight*, condemning what I'd done. I'd posed for *Playboy*, he charged, because I couldn't get a hit record and couldn't sing. It proved to me something I'd realized a long time ago: Without a hit record, you don't count in my family. My brother Tito, however, sitting silently beside Jermaine, looked into the camera and said simply, "We love you, La Toya." Tito has always been a quiet, steady voice of reason and logic.

I'd done the right thing for me, but few in my family shared that view. Janet called me, furious not that I'd posed but that I hadn't told her about it. My explanation that I'd tried to when she visited me in New York did not sway her. As I hung up, I remember thinking, This is only the beginning.

Eventually, I received the call I anticipated from Jermaine, who gave me an earful.

"I want you to know that you're a piece of shit! And I'm saying this because I know you're mad at me for cursing. But I want you to know that's what you are! You've degraded our family and you've made us all look bad." I found that criticism interesting coming from the father of an out-of-wedlock child.

"Jermaine," I said quietly, "when you calm down and can control your temper, then call me back, OK?"

He just shouted over me. "Another thing: I don't like you going on television and saying that we agree with what you've done! *None* of us agrees, so stop saying it!"

Thank goodness not all my siblings agreed with Jermaine. Michael urged me not to reply to him publicly, as several publications and television programs were dying for me to do. "Don't take Jermaine's bait," he warned, adding, "I want you to know that what you did is really great. But if they ask you what I think about it, please don't tell them." As much as I love Michael, he always seems to play both sides.

Jackie's call was the most touching. "I want you to know that I agree with whatever you do," he said. "I haven't seen the pictures, and I don't want to see them, because you're my sister. But I support you one hundred percent, and I love you."

Of all the calls, the one that said what I really wanted to hear was Marlon's. Having broken away from the family to live on his own terms, perhaps he best understood how I felt. Somehow he, too, had gotten an advance copy of the layout. "I saw the pictures, and I want you to know that they are beautiful," he said, "though I think the business with the snake went a little too far, and I don't agree with what you've done."

I felt a twinge of hurt but said, "Marlon, you're entitled to your own opinion. Thank you for telling me what you thought."

Before hanging up, he added tenderly, "Don't let the other members of the family get to you. Just do what you have to do."

The biggest surprise of all was Joseph's response: none at all. Mother, on the other hand, was bitterly upset with me. "Don't you ever, ever pose for *Playboy* again!" she sputtered when we finally spoke. "You've embarrassed me, La Toya!"

"I understand how you feel," I answered, "but don't you think Jermaine's overreacting?"

"Don't you know that Jermaine got on television and said those things because he loves you so much, La Toya?" she replied, as if that made sense.

"You call that love, Mother? You know better than that!"

"Well, anyway, I know you didn't really want to do it."

"Mother, nobody forced me," I said firmly. "I had the final say-so. I could have said no, but I didn't. That's what I wanted to do. But I'm still the same person inside. Can't you see that I am still your daughter?"

"Don't you ever do that again!" was all she said before hanging up. (As you can see, I still refuse to take orders from home.)

I certainly didn't expect Mother to be thrilled by the pictures, but I didn't think our relationship would dissolve over them. I was wrong. From then on, if I called home and said, "Hello," she'd answer, "Hi, Jan!" Realizing her mistake, she'd then claim to be too busy to talk. It was as if I didn't exist.

Upset, I told Michael about it, but he didn't believe me, saying, "Doesn't sound like Mother to me" or "Maybe she really *is* busy." I realized I would never convince him that Mother was anything other than a saint. That hurt, too. Michael and I had shared everything. All I wanted from him was a little moral support, a shoulder to cry on.

I couldn't stand the coldness, so I confronted my mother over the phone. "What is it?" I asked her. "We used to be best friends. What happened?"

"*You're* the one who decided to leave," she sniffed.

"But Randy left. Janet left. Michael left. You don't treat them like this."

She had no answer. But I did. This wasn't about love, this was about control.

I later came to realize that the pictorial was a test to see if my parents could love and accept me for the woman I am rather than the little girl they tried to mold. Whether or not my parents agree with everything I do, I am still their daughter. But *I* am in control.


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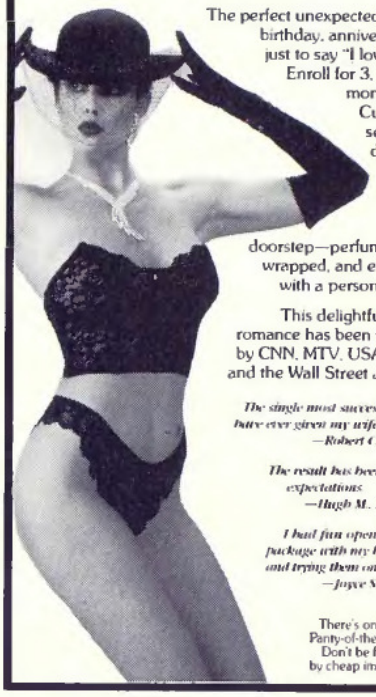

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# MAN-MADE DISASTER *(continued from page 130)*

*"Perhaps, with a little luck, Africa will once again be as full of promise as it was 30 years ago."*

Westerners imported to operate the programs left.

• If a charity can't show that it is using at least 90 percent of the money it raises on direct applications, it's a lousy candidate for support. CARE and Catholic Relief Services both emphasize development programs and claim to spend only about a dime of every dollar running their offices or raising more money. But even large, well-established charities often hide in individual project budgets more administrative costs—for salaries, PR and the rest. Oxfam U.K. routinely raised money for food, then secretly spent it on political projects such as lobbying for the Sandinistas. Still, larger organizations can target funds better, attempt to avoid duplication, and sometimes side-step the more obvious traps, such as having food turn up in the markets.

•

Let's be square here—famine is as big as politics. Consequently, the real solutions that must be imposed to stop famine in Africa are big solutions, some of them somewhat abstract, and all of them the kind you write to your Congressman about, since only governments can implement strategies—such as the following, for example—that are designed to assign responsibility and treat famine other than symptomatically.

On the other hand, pressing for solutions such as those offered here can make you feel better in the long run, since their object is not just to feed the hungry but to make famine unlikely in the first place.

• Halt all arms sales to all African nations. Africa is already one of the best-armed continents on earth. Nations that have spent nothing on health and education spend billions on defense. Invariably, at some point, governments turn these weapons on their own people.

• Punish the guilty. African despots are in a league of their own, not only killing and torturing their people on a huge scale but, as in the cases of the Central African Republic's Jean-Bedel Bokassa and Uganda's Idi Amin, allegedly eating them as well. This can occur only when it is understood that the world will never punish an African dictator. If the globe is our community, then the guy down the street who keeps whacking his wife around and killing his kids has to be stopped. Even if he's not like us. Even if he's in Africa.

*"This looks like it might be a fun place. . . ."*

• Make relief efforts surgical. Often, relief agencies set up business in a Third World capital the same way Citibank does, with long leases and lots of capital equipment, thus institutionalizing the apparatus of famine. But the UN's Staffan de Mistura once described to me his idea of a small, highly mobile strike force that could be summoned to an emergency area and have operations set up in a day or two—cargo planes coming and going, stringent monitoring of supplies, trucks flown in and loaded, fuel and road-building equipment brought in from outside, sort of like a small-scale Operation Desert Storm.

• Redraw the map to reflect natural political divisions. Ethiopia, for instance, makes much more sense as a loose federation of tribal-based trading partners than as an empire. Africa is a cartographic convenience, a continent filled with people who have little to do with one another. Tribal units are the transcendent fact of political life. Imagine Peru and China and Fiji sharing the same land mass, and you have an accurate idea of African diversity. Now imagine them sharing the same state, and you have an accurate idea of modern African politics.

• Put strings on governmental aid. Insist on economic, legal and political reform. If this can't be secured, then whenever possible, channel assistance to indigenous nongovernmental organizations. Monitor aid to avoid corruption and theft. But lift existing requirements that U.S. aid money be used to buy American products and services, since these requirements strangle development.

•

Slowly, the cycle of change that has swept through Europe seems to be making its way to Africa. The social utopians, having starved millions, are on the way out, giving way to market economists and social democrats. A few beleaguered tyrants are opting for open elections and the civil-war cycles may be slowing their pace. The respite in the usual run of African conflicts is giving farmers a season to plant, and perhaps it will give them a season to harvest, as well.

As 1991 draws to a close, there is a certain optimism among those in the aid business, since the logistical log jams caused by war have finally been broken and food is finally running down-river. Perhaps, with a little luck, Africa will once again be as full of promise as it was 30 years ago, on the eve of independence, when the continent produced far more food than it needed and sold the surplus on the world market to the hungry denizens of faraway continents, such as Europe. Africa might do so again, but only if Africans are freed from the chains cast by their own leaders and allowed the chance to survive, even prosper.

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# GRIP OF TREACHERY *(continued from page 104)*

*"There's nobody more corrupt than we are. We don't have morals. We got bylaws we live by and that's it."*

rip-off. The more intelligence people have, the more their ego comes into play, where they figure they can't be robbed.

*But how did you justify taking property that was not yours?*

I didn't give a fuck. I had to make a living and this was the best way I knew how. I couldn't see any other way. I enjoyed doing what I was doing because I was good at it. I was a specialist. I tried not to rob poor people. That would bother me. I would always try to take from the rich, figuring that this ain't going to hurt them, anyway. I've always said that the rich didn't get there doing the right thing. There's always something illegal they've done along the line if you dig deep enough. I once robbed a rich guy. A gorgeous home, worth several million at least. We found jewelry, but it was all costume shit. The guy who I was fencing this stuff to wouldn't give me a hundred dollars for it. But the next day, it's in the newspaper that fifty thousand dollars in gems was taken. Now my partners are beefing with me, thinking I'm holding out on them. This guy was the thief. He was scamming the insurance company. Look how greedy he was. I actually did him a favor.

*You say you didn't take from the poor, yet the Mafia cheats the working class by stealing from their union pension and benefits plans.*

I'm dealing with the higher-up guys in the unions. How could I think along those lines? Besides, money is the name of the game. There's corruption all over. And there's nobody more corrupt than we are. We don't have fuckin' morals. We got bylaws that we live by and that's it.

*Where were your parents while you were forming these beliefs and attitudes?*

My father had to leave town because he owed loan sharks money, so I didn't see him for twenty years. He was a numbers writer all his life, loved to shoot craps. My mother was quiet and minded her business. Just a typical Italian woman. All she cared about was her home. I always tried to stay clear of her, never give her any heartaches. My mother worries now that I'll get killed.

*When you watched gangster movies as a kid, did you root for the bad guys?*

The gangsters, always the gangsters. Dillinger. James Cagney. They were the heroes. But Bogey was my favorite role model. Sometimes I watch *Casablanca* once a week. It's my favorite movie. All I ever wanted to be was a crook.

*How about giving us your list of the best Mob films ever made?*

Well, I haven't seen *GoodFellas* yet. Let's see, I'd say *Godfather I* and *II*. Then—what's that one with Edward G. Robinson?—*Little Caesar*. That was great. Also *White Heat*. *The Roaring Twenties* was good, too. That's about the best five. *The Valachi Papers* was a great movie, on target with everything. *On the Waterfront* was another good one, too. I thought *Godfather III* stunk.

*Hollywood tries to imitate life, but, in the case of the Mob, do gangsters ever look to the movies for cues on how they should behave?*

Not really. The movies got their stuff from us, we didn't get it from them. You do get some phony guys who want to act like Don Corleone. Sonny Riccobene used to do that with the coat over his shoulders and always walking around with five, six guys. I used to borrow money from him and he would serve espresso with the *sambuca* and the cookies. The old Italians would do this. Sonny was trying to play Don Corleone and he wasn't even a made guy. We can see right through those people. Guys like that don't last.

*Is everyone vulnerable to being scammed?*

If I see a guy's honest, I don't fuck with him. You've got to find the larceny in the person, the greed. In my early years, I used to sell gold. I'd buy a fifteen-pound spool of brass wire and get it gold-plated. Then I'd buy a small piece of real eighteen-karat-gold wire and have my jeweler fuse it onto both ends. Now I go into a jewelry store and get the jeweler interested in this, tell him it just came out of the mill. I tell him it's fourteen karat. He clips a piece off the end, examines it and sees it's eighteen karat. So he thinks I'm stupid. At the time, gold's selling for four hundred dollars an ounce. I tell him, "Give me ten thousand dollars for the roll." Then I'll keep talking to him, don't give him any time to speak. I sold countless spools of brass. It wasn't me who was robbing them. It was their own greed that was robbing them.

*Any advice to young people considering a life in the Mob?*

Well, I wish them the best of luck, because as glorifying as it looks, and as glorifying as it is, it's a tough fuckin' road, brother. If you project any greed in this business, that's it, you're dead. And power, greed, jealousy, they all work in conjunction with one another. But in my heart, I still think the Mob is a great thing, if you're dealing with the right

*"I said I hope you don't believe that old myth about a man's size being important!"*

people. But you don't pick them, they pick you. In the state of Pennsylvania, you got close to fifteen million people, and they picked about sixty. You have a better chance of getting into West Point. I mean, I seen guys proposed who are tough killers and they won't take 'em in. The way it works is, we could go to the *capos* or to Nicky and say, "Look, I got a solid fella here, we know his family and we could mold this guy. He could become an asset to the family." And you're responsible for the guy you propose. If he turns out to be a rat, you're dead. That's why it's very tough to get in.

*But where's the big payoff? Everybody seems to wind up in jail or six feet under. Mobsters rarely live like millionaires, even when they have the money.*

Some do and some don't. Some of them stay low-key. You know, a lot of these guys are greaseballs. They're from the old school. Give them a fucking dish of spaghetti and a bottle of wine and they're satisfied. We were living high. Jesus Christ, look at Scarfo. Boats, houses in Florida, fancy restaurants every night, fancy clothes and cars. Thousand-dollar suits. I used to have all my suits tailor made. My shoes used to cost five hundred dollars. I still got some. I don't wear them. I got no use for them anymore.

*How much money did you raise for the family during the Eighties?*

I probably brought Scarfo five million dollars and pocketed another million and a half dollars for myself. I'd always have about five or ten thousand dollars in my pocket, no problem, especially after 1985.

*Did you squirrel any of it away, open a savings account or something?*

No, you can't go to banks. And we were afraid of safe-deposit boxes, because the FBI could check them. You know, they were following us twenty-four hours a day. And we couldn't buy stocks or real estate, because the Feds or the IRS would step in and ask, "Where the fuck did you get this money?" Cash is the thing. We'd stash our cash.

*So what would you do with the money?*

Spend it. Gamble. I'm a gambler. I'd go to a casino and blow fifty thousand dollars in a weekend. I could lose that in an hour sometimes. I'd bet five thousand dollars a card in baccarat. If I lost, I wouldn't lose any sleep, I wouldn't commit suicide, because I knew I'd be making more the next day.

*Did you blow everything in the casinos?*

Overall, I must have lost three to five million dollars over the past thirty years.

*Didn't you try to save a dime of it?*

This was just pin money to us. See, the real money was coming. We were on our way to being cash millionaires. But I did save about seventy thousand dollars for lawyer money. I had a guy holding it. Scarfo had pounded it into our heads to keep some money because lawyers are expensive. But Charlie, my partner, took that money after I was arrested.

*Where would you take your vacations? Paris? Venice?*

No, we went to Fort Lauderdale with our wives.

*Did you have any desire to see the world?*

Nah, not really. We hadn't gotten to that stage of our lives yet. You don't see none of these guys going to places like that. Florida was our place to go. I hate to fly. I do it, but I'm scared. I'm scared to death of flying. I think of all the rottenness I've done in my life when I'm on a fucking plane. All the evil.

*So global deal making was obviously not in the cards for you. What was everyday life like in the Mob?*

Well, I used to get up, go round the corner. We had a clubhouse where ten, fifteen made guys and associates would hang out. We'd conduct a lot of business from there. At lunchtime, we'd send out for food—you know, steak sandwiches or cold cuts or hot dogs—and whoever came in would eat it, forty to fifty guys. We'd play cards, gin rummy or hearts, during the day and conduct business. At night, we'd go out somewhere, or to a casino on the weekends and gamble. A lot of partying, lots of broads, a lot of fun. This is when you're not looking to kill somebody. For two fucking years, I didn't see my bed for weeks at a time. I'd sleep in a car, stalking people, finding a way to kill them. There were thirty-five people killed in five years in Philly—wide open, cowboy style. This town was on fire. People were petrified. Ours was the most vicious, violent outfit since Capone.

*What was your life in the Mob like for your ex-wife? Did it cause strains in the marriage?*

Well, she grew up in a Mob environment. It's a tough fuckin' life for a woman. But she knew the good life. When she walked out the door in the rain, twenty umbrellas would open up. All the respect she got from neighbors, from merchants, from waiters. She got top treatment. I bought my wife a ten-thousand-dollar bracelet once and got her a hot mink. It was worth fifteen thousand dollars and I got it for two thousand dollars. She knew that I belonged to the Mob, but she didn't know details.

*She didn't ask you for those details or try to encourage you to lead a straight life?*

No. She couldn't say anything. I mean, that was my way of life and that was it. Wives are showpieces, for Christ's sake. You just tell 'em, Listen, I ain't gonna be home for a week, and they don't say nothing. You don't tell your wife nothing. They just know. They see the stress on you. They see the respect that you get from people. And they know it doesn't come because you're a nice guy.

*Did everyone have girlfriends, as well?*

Mostly everybody fucked around on the side. Nothing that we were gonna leave our wives for. But broads just die for you. They love gangsters. I mean, we got the money, the cars, we're in the best

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places, the casinos, and we got the publicity. I mean, Jesus Christ, girls fight over you. We used to get fan mail from girls wanting to meet us. All kinds of broads—married ones, young ones, waitresses, executives. I had three or four I used to fool with. Sometimes I might have had seven or eight. That was enough. You know, how much could you get laid? They were available for when I wanted them and that was it. Daytime fucks, housewives.

*Any particularly memorable girlfriends?*

When I came out of jail in the Seventies, a public defender introduced me to this Jewish girl. She had money, lived in a good section of the city and loved to be around gangsters. She was the most vicious broad I ever met. I get to know her and she's selling pills. She had an old doctor that she used to blow and he used to give her a lot of prescriptions for Quaaludes. And she would cash them and sell the 'Ludes for a dollar apiece. She was grabbing, like, two thousand dollars a week just from Quaaludes. And she's taking me out and giving me money. So I start to meet her girlfriends and they start telling me stories about her.

*Were you sleeping with her girlfriends, too?*

Yeah, I fucked every girlfriend she had. And then I get her to confess to me one night that she killed her parents. Her mother was a champion bridge player and had a lot of stock and bond investments. So she started giving the mother arsenic a little bit at a time and killed her. It took her maybe two months.

*You've got to be kidding.*

It's true. She had the body cremated. Then she starts to give her father low doses of arsenic and kills him. And she got all the money, a few million. And her girlfriends confirmed the story. This blackhearted motherfucker. So I devised a plan. I get this public defender to get me names of two FBI agents. Then I tell her that these two agents went to a friend of mine and want to investigate her. She's scared to death. So I tell her I got somebody who can reach them, but it's gonna cost her a hundred thousand dollars. She gave me ten thousand dollars a week for ten weeks.

*You call her blackhearted? What about you?*

I was blackhearted. But she was the most vicious girl I ever met. I mean, she killed her mother and father. How fucking more vicious can you get? This was the only way I could get the money out of her other than marry her. I didn't trust her. I'd watch myself if I ate with her.

*Sex with her must have been relaxing.*

All I used to do was make her blow me. She used to love to do that. She once blew me for an hour and a half while I was driving a car through Philadelphia.

*Describe the day that you got made, or initiated into the Mob.*

It was a Sunday. The day before, the underboss had come over to my house and told me that tomorrow was my day. I was driven to this million-dollar house in Philadelphia, with a big swimming pool and a big table laid out with food—shrimp, steaks, meatballs, peppers, olives, spaghetti—and about forty chairs. I was on cloud nine. Scarfo is at the head of this long table and says, "Nick, do you know why you're here?" I said, "No." You're supposed to say no.

*What if you say yes?*

You just don't. So next, he says, "We want you to be one of us. Now, look around this table and tell me if there is anyone you have bad feelings with." I look around and say no.

*That's funny, considering all the back stabbing.*

I was on too much of a high to even think about it. So he makes a speech about how much I've done for the family and then says that I have the freedom to leave now and that I'll always be their friend. There would be no hard feelings if I didn't want to join. I said, "No, I want to be one of you."

*What if you had asked whether you could sleep on it and get back to them?*

Dead. Right on the spot. I wouldn't have made the door. I probably would have been strangled to death. Once you've been proposed, there's no turning back.

*What happened next?*

Scarfo points to a gun and a knife on a table and asks if I'd use these for any of these friends around the table. Then he lights a small piece of tissue paper in my hand while I say, "May I burn like the saints in hell if I ever betray any of my friends." He also pricks my trigger finger. Then you go around the table and kiss everyone. Then we have a feast and then you're told the rules. In the days that follow, you go around and meet the guys who weren't at the ceremony. Then word just seems to spread everywhere you go. And everywhere you go, the respect that you receive from nonmembers is enormous.

*What kind of rules are you told about?*

Well, the family doesn't fool with kidnaping, counterfeit money or bonds. You can shake down or rob drug dealers, but you can't protect them, lend them money or deal drugs yourself. No fooling with a member's wife. You can't even look at another guy's wife. That's automatic death. Even hitting another member is automatic death. He can ask for your life. You're supposed to report once a week to your *capo*, unless there's a good excuse. You can't go out of town without telling him. You always have to touch base. You're also told that silence is the code and this thing comes first. It comes before your mother, your father, your sister, your brother.

*But "this thing" doesn't come before your own life, does it?*

Right. Self-preservation is the only thing.

*Looking back at the entire ritual of being made, does it seem like a total crock of shit?*

You would have been a hell of a gangster.

*What do you mean by that?*

You're a vicious fucking guy.

*What are you talking about? Did I offend you?*

No, you didn't offend me. But you fear nothing. And you fuck with the unknown, which many people won't do. You don't give a fuck. You're tough. To ask, "What the fuck is this ritual?"

You're diggin' deep. Most people are afraid to talk to us. Most people wouldn't even dare to ask us about the making ceremony. It takes a lot of balls to bring it up. Even members won't discuss it. I don't think it's a crock of shit. It's a strong, deep and very meaningful ceremony. Here we are, forty guys, we're all killers, and we're all one. The ceremony's gorgeous. It's just beautiful. It's a sacred thing. You pray together, we all hold hands. It's just like getting Communion, for Christ's sake. It's better than that. In my heart, I still think it's a great thing. And I would do it all again if I had to start over. You know, there was nothing we couldn't do, nothing we couldn't penetrate. You've got friends, you belong to something that is so strong and so powerful. If there's a heaven, this is heaven on earth.

*Are most Mobsters religious?*

We're tormented inside by the evil we do. We know we have to pay, somehow, someday. But we belong to this thing and that comes first. We believe in it and we have our own laws that we follow.

*But what does God mean to Nick Caramandi?*

I don't have any answers when it comes to God. I go to church and I try to find Him, but I just can't seem to reach Him. Every day that goes by, I think about how I'm gonna be saved, but I just don't know. How can I say I'm sorry when in my heart I know I'm not sorry? I have no idea what to say to Him. I really don't. What the fuck can I say? I broke all the commandments. Could I say "Forgive me" when my heart tells me I would do it again? And again and again and again and again? I know that Christ died for our sins and we can mend our ways. But what the fuck can I mend if I still have it in me? What, am I gonna be a good boy now? Because I have to? I'm sorry, but I'm not sorry, so how can I ask God for forgiveness? He reads the heart. He don't read the lips.

*Does that mean an eternity in hell?*

I guess it does. Unless I find a way. But up to now, I can't find a way.

*What if there is no God? Then you're off the hook, right?*

Well, if there's no God, I'm off the hook. But there's got to be one. I feel there is one.

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## Sex in Cinema

(continued from page 148)

review this issue) features Mimi Rogers as a part-time swinger who gets religion and trades recreational sex for fundamentalism—and eventual tragedy. As a writer hacking it in Forties Hollywood, *Barton Fink*'s John Turturro makes love to a woman and wakes up to find her nude—and dead—body beside him in bed, a scene that is, thank God, understated.

The impact of films by young black directors is strong this year, reaching well beyond the black man–white woman love affair that makes Spike Lee's *Jungle Fever* a movie not just about interracial romance but about deeper social issues. In *A Rage in Harlem*, Gregory Hines spends lots of time in a brothel run by a drag queen; Forest Whitaker plays his God-fearing brother who falls for Robin Givens, a moll on the brink of salvation. *New Jack City* is another gritty showcase for *Fever*'s male star Wesley Snipes, this time portraying a malicious top mobster who treats women as sex objects—and treats his business rivals even worse. Sex is considerably more than an aggressive *macho* aside in Matty Rich's *Straight Out of Brooklyn*. That movie's teenaged hero (Lawrence Gilliard, Jr.) escapes from a stifling home environment to bunk with his girlfriend—"doing the nasty," as his kid sister puts it, just to help him feel better. John Singleton's *Boyz n the Hood*, set in south central L.A., depicts a world where a black teenager (Morris Chestnut) hoping for a football scholarship already has a woman, a baby and little chance of breaking away from an ever-shrinking circle of sex, violence and the endless pocketa-pocketa of police helicopters whirling overhead.

Director Gus (*Drugstore Cowboy*) Van Sant puts a perverse spin on sexual desire in *My Own Private Idaho*. Van Sant has two hot young Hollywood hunks, Keanu Reeves and River Phoenix, playing male hustlers—turning tricks in Oregon and points east with middle-aged weirdos, mostly men, and kissing each other while camping out. The movie's most outrageous bits are carefully controlled, more stylized than graphic—with speeded-up motion, still shots and humor to soften the fact that what we're dealing with here are blow jobs. In the title role of *Rambling Rose*, Laura Dern plays a love-hungry housemaid who bares a breast while trying to seduce the head of a Southern household (Robert Duvall) way back when. She's the cain't-say-no gal fondly remembered in flashbacks; young Lukas Haas is the boy who thanks her for launching his sex education. *Naked Obsession*, released early this year, stars one-time golden boy William Katt as a crusading L.A. city councilman who strays with a local stripper (Maria Ford), then faces murder charges and—worse—his wife's infidelity. "Honey, I'm home!" he says, walking in on the missus and his best friend bouncing away on a table top. Even less inhibited but rather silly is *Blue Movie Blue* from Zalman King, the man behind such show-and-tell flicks as *9½ Weeks* and *Wild Orchid*. It's the story of a sweet young thing (Nina Siemaszko) who becomes top girl in an elegant bordello but finally runs away to go back to high school.

All but extinct in the obsolete realm of theatrical releases, adult movies are increasingly limited to video-taped product for sale or rental. In a slew of handsomely packaged but cheaply produced features too numerous to track are the usual ripoffs of better-known straight films. Such titles as Paul Norman's *Cyrano* ("His nose isn't just for sniffing anymore") and *Edward Penis Hands* need no further explanation. The year's most memorable hard-core adult movie, though, is probably *Secrets*, directed by Andrew Blake, who made *Night Trips* and *Night Trips II*. Blake's episodic, all but plotless *Secrets* has been a smash hit in France, and he is famous for MTV-style erotica—with good sound, scant dialog and beautiful people going at it in a big way.

For uncompromising sex on screen, the British are still coming up with the real thing, or at least the surreal thing. As before, England's main claim to preeminence in eroticism is staked by director Peter Greenaway. After the 1990 brouhaha over *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife & Her Lover*, it was only natural that Greenaway's 1987 *Drowning by Numbers* would come our way. The clothes of every male principal come off before he is put to death, in turn, by one of three closely related women—mother, daughter and niece—all named Cissie. The details don't matter. Like most Greenaway efforts, *Drowning* is patently devised to annoy as many viewers as it amuses. The M.P.A.A. was not amused by the movie's advertising, which dimly depicted a man and a woman in a compromising position. "*The New York Times* accepted our ad, but the M.P.A.A. kept giving us grief about it," says Miramax' director of advertising, David Dinerstein. "*Drowning* had already been rated R, but we just pulled the movie's rating and released it unrated."

Greenaway's next epic will be *Prospero's Books*, a fanciful version of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, starring John Gielgud, Isabelle Pasco and evidently dozens of characters wearing nothing at all. No one knows, at this writing, whether the ample male and female frontal nudity will elicit an NC-17 and/or a thundering protest from the far right.

Meanwhile, other Brits keep lighting the torch for sexual freedom. Amanda Donohoe, recently visible as a lusty bisexual attorney on American TV's *L.A. Law*, stars with Gabriel Byrne in *Dark Obsession*. He is a jealous British aristocrat and

hit-and-run driver who seems absorbed in rather explicit fantasies concerning Amanda's voracious appetite for love. Theresa Russell takes to the street, back seats, underpasses or anywhere she is hired to put out in director Ken Russell's *Whore*. She also talks directly to the camera in this blunt, grungy first-person account of a prostitute's true profession. It is not a pretty picture. The same might be said of *Strip Jack Naked*, an autobiographical film by Britain's Ron Peck, giving an account of his homosexual experiences since 1962, when he was 14. Shown at New York's third International Festival of Lesbian and Gay Films, *Strip Jack Naked* has nudity, movie clips, compassion and wry acknowledgments of the menace of AIDS.

Foreign-language films, with a few notable exceptions, are no longer setting the pace for adult movie fare, judged by what we've seen so far this year. The gorgeously photographed *Ju Dou*, an Oscar nominee from China, was disowned by its country of origin, which balked at being represented by a torrid tale of abuse, adultery and exhibitionism. The Soviet-French coproduction *Taxi Blues* is a caustic social satire full of hard-drinking Muscovites—fighting over their women in a sly slice of life that has one unsober citizen playing saxophone in the nude. The multilingual *Europa, Europa* is a serious epic about a Jewish boy passing for a Christian in wartime Russia, Poland and Germany, sleeping with a female Nazi and trying hard not to let anyone see that he has been circumcised.

From Tunisia, of all places, comes *Halfouine*. Director Ferid Boughedir's hero is a 12-year-old boy inching into puberty. Aroused by the constant spectacle of uninhibited naked women as he accompanies his mother to Turkish baths in the Halfouine section of Tunis, the boy finally achieves liberation. Boughedir deliberately sets out to break the taboos of an Arab culture "looking back at the Middle Ages."

Among upcoming films from France, one of the most eagerly anticipated is *Madame Bovary*, with Isabelle Huppert starred in the Flaubert classic about a restless middle-class matron who is driven to adultery, rebellion and suicide. There is more likely to be graphic sexuality, though, in Bertrand Blier's *Merci la Vie*. Blier tracks the peculiar career of a nymphet named Joelle (Anouk Grinberg) who sleeps with every man she meets and transmits an awful virus to each of her sex partners. The plot sickens when she falls in love with an unscrupulous doctor (the ubiquitous Gérard Depardieu) who encourages her promiscuity because it builds up his practice. In the age of AIDS, *Merci* sounds like a cold French kiss-off.

Small wonder that *Naked Tango*, *The Comfort of Strangers* and such super-sizzling features as *Zandalee* (which went straight to video, with Nicolas Cage and Erika Anderson still in a sweat) turn out to be sumptuously scenic but anti-erotic spectacles equating sex appeal with retribution and death.

Where do we go from here? Well, even Dinerstein, Miramax' adman, grants that he detects some improvement. "The ratings change *was* helpful. People are perceiving NC-17 films as more adult-oriented without the much heavier stigma that was attached to an X."

Despite a current tendency toward blandness, what the paying public wants will seldom be censored out of existence. The near future promises further intimate encounters between expectant parents Warren Beatty and Annette Bening in *Bugsy*, directed by Barry Levinson. This, lest we forget, is the story of Bugsy Siegel, the noted West Coast gang lord whose sexual prowess was legendary. It's believed to be white-hot. Ditto Wim Wenders' futuristic love story *Until the End of the World*, due late this year, co-starring William Hurt and French newcomer Solveig Dommartin in steaming proximity. No one is sure what to expect from such potentially potent book-based dramas as Claude Chabrol's *Quiet Days in Clichy*, based on another Henry Miller lulu about the author's early adventures in Paris and starring Andrew McCarthy, or David (*Dead Ringers*) Cronenberg's *Naked Lunch*—with Peter Weller, Judy Davis and Roy Scheider swelling the cast of a 1992 release adapted from the notorious blue book by William Burroughs.

A virtual cinch to stir the fires of controversy is *Basic Instinct*, an erotic thriller with Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone, which will also open early next year. In San Francisco, where it was filmed, gay and lesbian picketers have already sworn to boycott the movie for what they see as explicit gay bashing.

The way things go is pretty accurately summed up by the ad campaign for the current *Mobsters*, a major movie with Christian Slater (as Lucky Luciano) and Richard Grieco (as a more youthful Bugsy Siegel) heading a foursome of young hoods on the make. "We're going to sell the picture for its heat and sexuality," admits producer Steve Roth, who adds as an afterthought, "We'd be stupid not to."

Roth clearly perceives the enduring truth that sex on the movie screen means business—and big business at that, especially when the moon is right and the public mood is mellow. It hasn't been a banner year for boldness. But while Wildmon and such vigilantes come and go, crying wolf over the clear and present danger of immorality, the movies over which they're losing sleep will probably outlast them.


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# BOTTOMS UP

*(continued from page 136)*

"Well, guess who that woman was?" She smiled impishly and lifted her beer. "Bottoms up," she added, winking.

Suddenly, Rachel came to life: She sat up with her mouth agape. I felt abandoned. "No way," she said. "No fucking way. You never told me this, Lesley."

*Told her what?* I was having trouble following all this, my mind still focused on the poor guy who couldn't get it up when his wife fondled his prick.

Giving us each a private, conspiratorial glance, Lesley took a dramatic pull on her beer. "There I was with my sister, girls' night out and all that, and, man, were we wasted. We'd smoked a joint and snorted about a gram each and were working on our third or fourth Long Island iced tea when all of a sudden, the stripper dude snakes his way over to our table, clearly excited. I mean, we could see it bulging there in his undies, right? So what did I do? Well, what do you think? I crawled on top of the table—understand, I was *wasted*—crouched there on all fours and pulled them down. *Boing!* Just like a jack-in-the-box. The whole room, from out of nowhere, explodes; everyone starts chanting, *Suck it! Suck it! Suck it!* and I was like, what the hell, you know? I mean, he was just standing there, shaking his ass, his prick ticktocking back and forth under my nose like a metronome, and these broads were climbing on tables and shouting and stomping and I thought the goddamn roof was going to cave in, and so, fuck it, I did what they told me. Right there in front of everybody. And what do you think these broads start doing? They start counting. I'm not shitting you, the whole room starts going, *One! Two! Three! Four!* like they were watching a game show, and from across the room, this black chick who couldn't stand it any longer rushes up behind the guy—I'm seeing all this from around his hip, you see—and she grabs his buns, takes a cheek in each hand and gives them a Charmin squeeze, and she's making these moaning noises the whole time, groaning stuff like *Suck it, honey! Suck it till it's dry!* So I did. I sucked him till I choked. The crowd got more jazzed, they were going, *Thirty-five! Thirty-six!* pounding the tables, stomping the floor. Anyway, at forty-one, I decided we'd both had enough. Me and him both. So what do you think happened next?"

Well, I wasn't about to answer that one. No way. But Rachel, bless her heart, gave it a shot: "The place got raided?"

"No, silly," Lesley snapped, exasperated. "I mean, did I or did I not swallow?"

Now, that one I did take a shot at. I figured it was 50-50, right? "Easy," I said. "You swallowed."

"*No!*" she erupted. "Wrong, buzz, you lose. I didn't swallow. But I didn't *not* swallow, either. Listen to this: What I did was sit up, spin the guy around by his shoulders and offer him to the chick behind him, this snazzy black chick in a purple dress. And so she drops to her knees—*crack!* right there on the tile—and sucks him dry, dry as a bone. And did *she* swallow? You bet your ass she did. Yessiree, good to the last drop."

•

Much later that night, after Lesley had whirled out of the apartment on the arm of yet another Bottoms Up stripper called, alternately, Alex or Star (one name, just take a guess, was her Bottoms Up *nom de guerre*), Rachel and I did some redecorating in her room, which, to my mind, looked sufficiently lived in as it was, which showed how much I knew.

"I want to put this painting over my bed," Rachel told me, displaying for my visual enjoyment an enormous pastel drawing of a bottle-nosed dolphin emerging from a foam of ocean water. "Think you could hold it up while I see how it looks?"

I had to admit it was quite beautiful—its lush washes of blue and green and the glossy white strip of translucence highlighting the animal's tumid flesh. No question about it, the girl had talent. So, as per my role, I bestowed upon her the line for which I had clearly been summonsed:

"Did you do this?"

"What?" she asked, a smile betraying her feigned insouciance. "Oh, that. Jesus, years ago. Junior, sophomore year or something, I can't even remember now."

"Hold on a second. You went to *college?*" I tried to swallow back the incredulity in my voice, but it was too late.

She regarded me with scorn.

"Yes, *I* went to college. Is that so hard to believe?"

"No, no, no," I insisted. "I just thought you said you . . . I don't know, I think I was thinking of Lesley." Surely, I thought, *Lesley* didn't go to college.

But Rachel was kind enough to wave my sycophancy aside—why, I have no idea. What she did instead was rather astonishing. She absolutely, with no prodding on my part, opened up to me. Just like that. She sat down on the floor where she had been standing, picked at the carpet and began opening. Here's what I learned:

Rachel had, in fact, gone to college, in the lush environment of northern Connecticut, and, no surprise there, majored in art; in the space of two years, she had acquired a fondness for Joni Mitchell and an adeptness at painting dolphins, but it wasn't long before she started looking for something else. And so, when she was offered a job at the Miami Seaquarium, she packed her bags and moved south, where she served as a dolphin trainer for a year, seven to ten shows a day. But at five dollars an hour, money got tight pretty quickly, the rent went up

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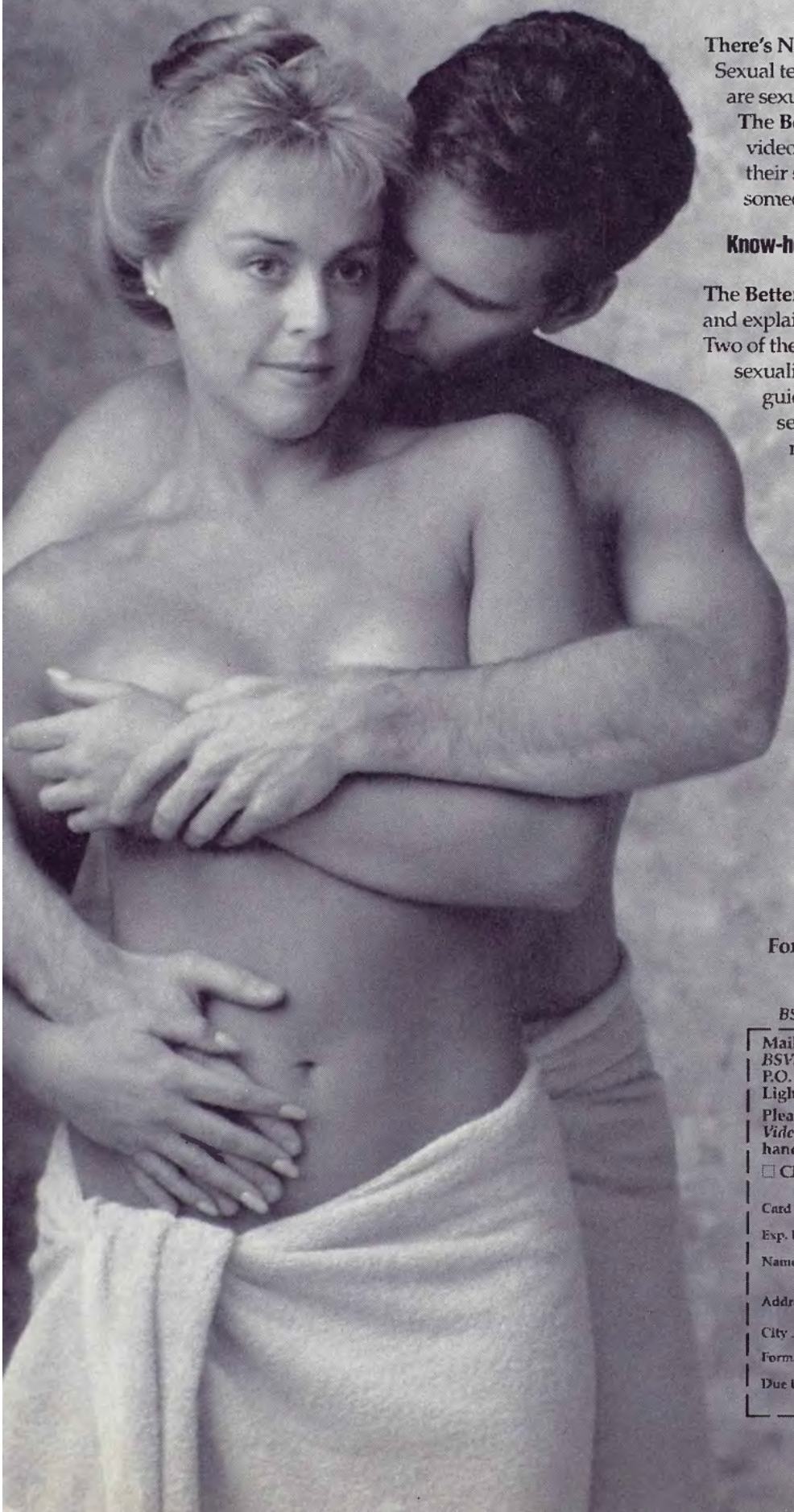

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and all the usual etc., so she went looking for extra income. Nights at Bottoms Up, she assured me, were fantastically lucrative—and tiring. After a few weeks of moonlighting as a stripper, the Seaquarium began to complain. With a potential hourly wage of $35, Bottoms Up came out on top.

That was three months ago.

"But I don't mind," she insisted. "Not really, anyway. I know I won't be doing this my whole life. I just act like I'm someone else when I'm up there, which is true, in a way: That's not *me*, Rachel Coleman, dancing in the nude, but Ashley Park—my stage name—this sexy chick who can fuck the shit out of a pole. The *pole*—I'm sorry; there's, like, this pole at the end of the stage and you sort of, I don't know, fuck it, I guess. Guys get off on it. But sometimes I get kind of spooked, you know? Like last Friday night. I was perfectly sober and I was just dancing like usual and from out of nowhere, it suddenly occurred to me, Man, what am I doing here in the nude in front of all these guys? It was just so weird."

What—she thinks that's weird?

"But now that I'm sharing rent with Lesley," she continued, "I can save even more money, maybe enough to buy a car after all. And as soon as I do, I'm packing up and moving to Oregon."

Presently, we did a bit of stripping ourselves—went bottoms up, as it were. But we didn't fuck. Not really.

"No, David," she pleaded in the dark, her pastel dolphin looming above us, "not so quick. I need to get to know a person before I . . . well, you know."

Curious, this in-bed shyness. I mean, the girl did strip for a living.

The fact is, I wasn't so sure I was ready to sleep with her, either. Not that she wasn't arousing. God almighty, was she ever. Her hips were a bit squarish and her bottom had a sad, deflated flatness to it, but her skin was luminous and smooth, her legs sturdy and nimble and her breasts tumid and perky. Besides, she came absolutely alive when her clothes came off—a case of bringing the office home, I suppose, but not really. The thing was, I genuinely liked her. I found her smart, lively, interesting, strong-willed, funny and terrifically arousing; I was utterly capable of falling for her. And once I realized that, there in the nude in her girlish bedroom, I found I strongly disapproved of the way she made a living.

"You're better than Bottoms Up," I told her after the "Should we fuck?" question had been sufficiently settled in the negative. "You really should quit."

"I know, I know. I will—I told you I would already, remember? When I say I'm going to do something, I do it."

"Good," I told her. "That makes me feel better."

"By the way," she said, sitting up, all of a sudden, "that reminds me. I've been meaning to ask you what you do for a living. You never told me."

I thought about this for a second and then said, "I'm setting up contacts." I was suddenly afflicted with a full bladder. "Hey, how do I get to your——"

"Wait a second. What's that supposed to mean? How are you paying rent?"

I plopped back down on the pillow, holding my breath. "I wait tables," I admitted finally. "At a place not far from Bottoms Up. Right off U.S. One."

She thought about that for a second or two and then said, "Didn't you tell me you have a master's degree or something?"

"Yes," I said. "I have an M.A. in political science."

We both remained silent for a few moments. Rachel finally broke the silence by saying, "Oh," and with that, I slipped on my shorts and went back to my apartment.

•

Two nights later—or three mornings after, I should say, as it was easily six A.M.—Rachel paid me a surprise visit. I had left my door unlocked in the hope that she would do exactly what she did, and when she tiptoed into my bedroom, I feigned sleep, though, in fact, I was wide awake. In the dark, with one eye slightly opened, here's what I saw:

*A* WOMAN *enters a* BEDROOM, *places by a* DRESSER *an overnight* BAG *filled presumably with work clothes and takes off her* SNEAKERS, *one foot at a time, balancing on one leg like a sleeping flamingo. We see her unbutton her cutoff* JEANS *and squirm out of them, revealing two slightly flat but nevertheless arousing oval* BUTTOCKS, *each accentuated by the frilly black* THONG *serving as* UNDERPANTS. *We get a closer glimpse of this garment when the*

*"I'd like to have a nurse present—it's kinkier that way."*

WOMAN *unbuttons her* SHIRT, *which opens like drapery and presents to our view two 24-year-old* MAMMARY GLANDS *that only hours before had been instrumental in earning the* WOMAN *a not-too-shabby $225 in wages, tax-free. Then the* WOMAN *lifts the* COVERS *and crawls into the* BED, *which is filled with a not-really-sleeping* MAN.

MAN: Ummggrrflnth. . . .

WOMAN: Are you asleep?

MAN (*rising from the bed and rubbing his eyes*): Rachel? Is that you?

WOMAN: Oh, you're so full of shit, David. You weren't asleep.

•

For the next two or three weeks, Rachel and I were devoted bed partners. She generally slept at my place, as Lesley was slowly becoming unmanageable. Her baby sitter, a mysterious woman known only as Aunt Doddie, had finally had it with Lesley's creative financing, so Lesley's hitherto invisible son Bruno was living there full time. The child had himself a full-time Mommy—and a Mommy who couldn't work nights anymore. With no money coming in, Lesley responded as any financially strapped single mother might: She considerably increased her daily intake of cocaine. Boy, was she a mess. Boy, was Bruno a mess.

Eventually, she found a new baby sitter; the problem was that the woman—an adorable Hispanic grandmother named Mrs. Monteleagre who lived upstairs—agreed to watch Bruno during the day only, and so Lesley became one of Bottoms Up's handful of day strippers. As you may have guessed, there isn't much money in day stripping—folks generally like to read the newspaper with breakfast. Most of what she made went directly to Mrs. Monteleagre; the rest went to an enterprising cocaine dealer who also lived upstairs, and who'd found a lucrative new customer in lovely Lesley Lupis.

Meanwhile, Rachel and I made love, smoked cigarettes, spun plans, imagined scenarios, worked out finances. But we grew tired of reminding each other that nothing much was happening with our lives. As a result, our conversation began to turn toward Lesley's dramatic disintegration—a neutral source of encouragement to us both.

Or at least I thought it was neutral.

"God, Rachel, you have got to get out of there," I said one night. "She's determined to bring you right down with her."

"I'm fine," Rachel assured me. "It's a bad month for Lesley and she needs a friend. I can't walk out on her—what about Bruno?"

"But you've already poured all your savings into the entire rent, the electric bill, the phone bill. What about your car? What about moving? Her coke problem isn't your problem."

"Look," Rachel said, "Lesley's under a lot of stress. It helps her cope, she says—

# WHERE & HOW TO BUY

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Page 38: **Outerwear** by *Pendleton*, at selected fine stores nationwide. By *Woolrich*, at select major department stores nationwide. By *Nautica*, at The Nautica Store, 216 Columbus Ave., N.Y.C., 212-496-0933; better department and specialty stores nationwide. By *Tommy Hilfiger*, at Bloomingdale's, 1000 Third Ave., N.Y.C., 212-705-2000. **Hunting shirts** by *Willis & Geiger*, store locations, Customer Service, 800-223-1408; Bergdorf Goodman Men, 745 Fifth Ave., N.Y.C., 212-753-7300. By *Mondo di Marco*, at Saks Fifth Avenue, 611 Fifth Ave., N.Y.C., 212-753-4000. **Jacket, shirt** and **trousers** (shown) by *Bill Robinson*, at Charivari Sport, 201 W. 79th St., N.Y.C., 212-799-8650; Jeffrey Michael, 1318 Fourth Ave., Seattle, 206-625-9891.

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Page 98: **Jacket** by *Eddie Bauer*, through Eddie Bauer catalog, 800-426-8020. **Shirt** by *Norm Thompson*, through Norm Thompson catalog, P.O. Box 3999, Portland, OR, 800-547-1160. **Pullover** by *The Territory Ahead*, through The Territory Ahead catalog, 27 E. Mason St., Santa Barbara, 805-962-5333. **Jeans** by *Perry Ellis America*, through Spiegel catalog, 800-345-4500. **Belt** by *The Territory Ahead*, through The Territory Ahead catalog, 27 E. Mason St., Santa Barbara, 805-962-5333.

Page 99: **Jacket** by *Avirex USA*, at The Cockpit, 595 Broadway, N.Y.C., 212-925-5455; 9609 Little Santa Monica, Beverly Hills, 213-274-6900; through the Cockpit catalog, 800-354-5514. **Jeans** by *Smythe & Co.*, through Smythe & Co. catalog, 800-955-7788.

Page 100: **Belt** by *James Reid*, through James Reid, Ltd., of Santa Fe catalog,114 E. Palace Ave., Santa Fe, 800-545-2056. **Rucksack** by *Eddie Bauer*, through Eddie Bauer catalog, 800-426-8020. **Gloves** by *St. John's Bay*, through JCPenney catalog, 800-222-6161. **Boots** by *Rockport*, through Norm Thompson catalog, P.O. Box 3999, Portland, OR, 800-547-1160. **Sweater** by *The Peruvian Connection*, through The Peruvian Connection catalog, Canaan Farm, Dept. P91, Tonganoxie, KS, 800-255-6429. **Watch** by *Norm Thompson*, through Norm Thompson catalog, P.O. Box 3999, Portland, OR, 800-547-1160. **Binoculars** by *Tasco*, through JCPenney catalog, 800-222-6161. **Flask** by *Stelton*, through the L.S Collection catalog, 765 Madison Ave., N.Y.C., 212-472-3355.

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Page 102: **Cap** by *St. John's Bay*, through JCPenney catalog, 800-222-6161. **Ties** by *M. C. Escher*, through Flax art & design, 800-547-7778. **Briefcase** by *J. Peterman*, through J. Peterman Company, 800-231-7341. **Fountain pen** by *Montblanc*, through Fahrney's Pens, Inc., Catalog Dept., 8329 Old Marlboro Pike, B13, Upper Marlboro, MD, 800-624-PENS. **Lighter** by *Harley-Davidson*, through Harley-Davidson MotorClothes and Collectibles catalog, catalog exclusively at all authorized Harley-Davidson dealers. **Watch** by *Fleming Bo Hansen*, through the L.S Collection catalog, 765 Madison Ave., N.Y.C., 212-472-3355. **Sweater** by *Tweeds*, through Tweeds catalog, One Avery Row, Roanoke, VA, 800-999-7997. **Pocket watch** by *M & Co.*, through Flax art & design, 800-547-7778. **Belt** by *James Reid*, through James Reid, Ltd., of Santa Fe catalog, 114 E. Palace Ave., Sante Fe, 800-545-2056.

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Page 152–155: **TV/VCR** by *Sony*, store locations, 201-930-SONY. **Pasta cooker** by *Metrokane, Inc.*, at Dillard's and Higbee's nationwide; select Fortunoff locations, NJ and Long Island; store locations, 212-759-6262. **Eyewear** by *Eagle Eyewear, Inc.*, store locations, Eagle Eyewear, Inc., P.O. Box 486, Whitehouse, NJ, 908-236-9300. **Pipe** and **accessories** by *Porsche Design*, at Porsche Design, 236 N. Rodeo Dr., Beverly Hills, 213-205-0095; South Coast Plaza, Costa Mesa, CA, 714-662-2992. **Rapman** by *Casio*, at various retailers nationwide. **Flashlight** by *Streamlight, Inc.*, store locations, 800-523-7488. **Mastermind** by *Synetic Systems*, 800-388-6345; Hammacher Schlemmer, Dept. C16, 800-759-5700. **Trunk** by *Alfred Dunhill*, at Alfred Dunhill of London, 450 Park Ave. at 57th St., N.Y.C., 212-753-9292; 201 N. Rodeo Dr., Beverly Hills, 213-274-5351.

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Page 181: **Varsity jackets:** by *Reebok*, see your local athletic retailers. By *Michael Hoban for North Beach*, at North Beach stores nationwide. By *Perry Ellis*, at Saks Fifth Avenue, 611 Fifth Ave., N.Y.C., 212-753-4000. By *Golden Bear*, at all Sea Dream Leather locations, VA, NC; Pitkin County Dry Goods, Aspen, 303-925-1681.

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which is bullshit, I know, but she helped me out when I got fired at the Seaquarium; she took me to work every night—I owe her my support is all."

"Support?" I shouted. "Lesley needs treatment, not support. I can't believe——"

"Hey, just fuck you, all right?" She sat up and wrapped her arms around her legs. "You don't know shit. You wait tables, you're still mooching off your parents—yes, you are, don't feed me that bullshit. If your folks quit bailing you out each month, you'd be in worse shape than Lesley is. You have no idea what it means to be on your own, completely self-sufficient, nobody supporting you or putting shirts on your back. Not only does Lesley have herself to worry about, she has Bruno. It's harder than you think."

I didn't say anything at first; I was taking in the fact that Rachel sounded like a grownup.

Finally, I said, "She needs help is all I'm saying."

To which Rachel said, "And just what do you think I'm trying to do here?"

A few minutes later, she got dressed and went home.

•

I never saw her again after that.

For starters, one of my "contacts" came through. I was hired as a management trainee for a wholesaler in Miami that specialized in children's toys and restaurant supplies. I quit my table-waiting job and started putting in 55-to-60-hour work weeks, driving all over Miami in hopes of persuading some toy retailer to start carrying a new Mario Brothers video cassette. I also wasted hours and hours trying to peddle a table-waiter beeper system no restaurant in its right mind would waste money on. On Friday nights, I went drinking with my old waiter buddies.

Since I was working days now and Rachel worked nights, it was no major feat not to run into her. As for Lesley, I never saw her, either—or Bruno, for that matter. Each night, as I dragged my tired body past their apartment, I stopped and listened for some sound to drift through their door, but I never heard a peep. I began to wonder if they even lived there anymore.

And then, one night—a Friday, actually—I was getting soused with the gang at my old restaurant and I started spilling my guts about Rachel and my little summer adventure. I had never told anyone—not even my closest friends—and it was so wonderful to get it all out in the open that I literally felt something lift off my shoulders. Talking about her made me miss her. Granted, I'd been missing her for months, but this was the first time I'd admitted it. What's more, as I gave her name public utterance, I also lent her a reality I'd been suppressing all fall. My new life as a "management trainee," my new clothes, my new acquaintances, all of it seemed suddenly unreal and unsubstantial. What mattered was Rachel, in my bedroom, squirming out of those cut-off jeans.

What happened next was something of a blur. One minute, I was at the bar at my former place of employment and the next minute, I was within breathing distance of the Bottoms Up bouncer I'd seen Rachel and Lesley kiss that day last summer. I stood there at the door with my I.D., waiting for the guy to recognize me. But then I remembered I'd never *been* to Bottoms Up.

We tumbled inside, all five of us; the place was appallingly small, about as spacious as a medium-sized lecture hall. The stage extended from the bar like an enormous outstretched tongue and was tipped at the end by the pole Rachel had claimed she was rather adept at "fucking." On it, a woman I vaguely recognized writhed and undulated in time to the European synthesizer music pulsating from the loud-speaker. In one corner, under bright lights, two men played pool. MTV flickered from the bar TV.

"So Dave, where *is* she?" someone said.

"Seriously, dude," someone else joined in.

But I was having second thoughts. "Aw, let's get out of here." I started maneuvering my way toward the door.

But on my way out, I ran into Alex, a.k.a. Star, who, I was stunned (and not a little flattered) to find, recognized me.

"Rachel," she said, as if that were my name. She'd just finished dancing and was heading back to the dressing room, her tiny things—a pair of crotch-splitting shorts and a bikini top—clutched modestly over her chest, thereby leaving the glistening moss of her pudenda bare as God had made it.

"Right," I said. "Rachel Coleman. We're pals. Is she here?"

"Here?" Alex, a.k.a. Star, said. "God, she quit ages ago. Went to Connecticut or something to go to school."

My heart sank. Now I *knew* I wanted to go home. Immediately.

"How long ago was this?" I asked.

She hesitated. *You should know all this*, her look seemed to say. Or maybe all she meant was, *Can't you see I'm naked?* "How long? God, I don't know, a month, two months, something like that. It was after all that shit with Lesley."

"What shit?" I wanted to know. I tried to will myself sober.

"Forget it," Alex, a.k.a. Star, suddenly corrected herself. "Look, it's great seeing you, but I've got to run. Have a good time." And with that, she disappeared behind a curtain, her plump bum quivering behind her.

I got a Jim Beam at the bar and sat

down at a table by myself, trying to piece together this new information.

Suddenly, a high-heeled shoe smacked down next to my arm. As I looked up, I felt pressure on my shoulder, and before I could get my bearings, an enormous woman in a one-piece minidress had hoisted herself, pumps and all, onto my table. Whoops and hollers came from the bar.

"You asshole," said a familiar voice. "I knew you'd come crawling in here eventually."

Looming above me, her face foreshortened above the stately cliff of her chest, was none other than Lesley Lupis, back on the night shift. I couldn't think of a single thing to say.

"Well, a howdy-do would be nice," she sneered, and began grinding away on my table. Her dress—what little there was of it—clung to her as if she'd been sealed in the thing. "Some neighbor you are. You live next door and I haven't heard shit from you in months."

"Same here," I said, which was intended to mean Hello.

"Whatever," she said into space; by the whoops from the bar, I surmised that Lesley had been "purchased" for me by my thoughtful friends. Reading my thoughts, she said quietly, almost tenderly, "She bolted two months ago."

"I didn't know that," I lied.

"And why the hell not?"

It was a good question. A valid question. What was I supposed to say? I clutched the side of the wobbling table, watching as Lesley's spiked heels cha-cha'd dangerously close to my fingers. I waited for the moment to dissolve. At the bar, my friends grew unsettlingly quiet.

Lesley's heel scraped across the table and came down hard between my thumb and forefinger.

"I can't believe you didn't have the guts to even show your face," she was saying. "Or call. I mean, we were *next door*. And what gets me is she thought you were this *nice guy*. 'But, Lesley, he's really this, he's really that.' I said, 'If he's got a prick, he's a prick.' And I was right. You're a prick."

But my drunkenness emboldened me, so I looked up at her face. She wasn't moving anymore; her hands were on her hips and her hair was wreathed by the overhead lights. "She never came by to see me, either," I pointed out.

"Because you threw her out!" Lesley snapped. An old codger at the next table looked up for the first time: All this time, he'd been staring at his drink, so as to honor the territorial rights of my purchase, I suppose.

"That's bullshit," I said, slowly feeling absolved of responsibility. "She told you that?"

"She didn't tell me shit," Lesley said. "Nothing at all. She helped me pay off some debts and I found her a ride to Connecticut. End of story. She split for school, is living with her parents or something, and I haven't seen her since." She looked over at the bar and I looked with her. One of my friends was waving an unidentifiable bill. He looked pissed. "God, what an asshole," she said.

"No kidding," I said. I suddenly experienced the frightening realization that this towering woman still lived next door to me. That realization inspired in me a tentative hard-on. I chanced my first look up Lesley's snug, crotch-high skirt and I saw that she was wearing leopard-skin panties that only partially covered the brittle French cut of her pubic hair. I detected on her the faintly sour smell of urine. Her thighs were glossed with a light layer of sweat.

"Well," she said finally, "nice shooting the shit, neighbor, but I've gotta make a living. My boss is starting to wonder what I'm doing, so here's the deal: This is going to cost you twenty extra bucks. You understand?"

In fact, I did not understand. In my drunken state, I grew suddenly indignant—Rachel or no Rachel.

"Wait a second," I said. "I thought those guys already paid for it." It was getting easier and easier to stand up to her;

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the reasonable side of my brain told me, *You're doing fine, Dave.*

"They did," Lesley said, grinding in earnest now but still staring at the same vague spot in the middle of the room. "They paid money to see my tits. But remember that little voice you told us about? The one that's been asking you what the woman's *body* looks like? *Naked*? In front of the *guys*? Well, that little voice has to cough up another twenty dollars or no dice." She pulled a shoulder strap down and my friends began to whoop again; the old man looked up, too. "It's the *money*, remember? That's what makes it *interesting*. I'm keeping this interesting for you, Davey boy."

I thought about that for a second. I looked at my friends, I looked at the old man, I looked round the bar. Everyone's attention was focused on our table. Even the petite Asian woman preparing to take the main stage seemed captivated: Clutching a Teddy bear (part of her act, I presumed), she waited at the edge of the stage and regarded Lesley with a bemused, admiring gaze.

My head hummed furiously. So did my prick. Jesus, I had a boner in a strip bar—one of the cardinal no-nos, Rachel had once told me. There was no way I could get up without being detected, but there was also no way I could sit there and let Lesley grind forever, fully clothed. For now, we were the entertainment. The whole bar was depending on us.

The old man at the next table said, "Let's see it, honey—get the lead out."

"You got about five seconds," Lesley hissed, "and then I'm going to poke this heel into that little thing behind your zipper."

Hollering issued from the whole bar now. Pool cues were pounded, *Funky Cold Medina* burped through the sound system and my hard-on was evidently not going away. *This woman lives next door*, I told myself.

"One . . ." Lesley said, dropping another shoulder strap. The shouting got louder.

"Two. . . ."

I shifted in my seat, stretching my leg.

"Three. . . ."

With what I hoped was insouciant ease, I plucked a 20 out of my wallet and gingerly slid it between the twin towers of Lesley's glossy thighs. Verily, my left hand did not know what my right hand was doing.

Lesley smiled and brought her undulations to a halt. Slowly she crouched, her solid knees nearly bumping my shoulders. Her heady smell—sweat, cigarettes, bourbon—engulfed me.

"Not only are your friends pricks," she said, "but they're suckers."

She stepped rather gracefully off the table and smoothed her dress. Meanwhile, Miss Teddy Bear was mounting the stage, Elvis Presley's chestnut of roughly the same name accompanying her as fanfare. I held my breath, waiting to see what was going to happen, but Lesley simply reached for my Marlboros on the table and helped herself to a butt.

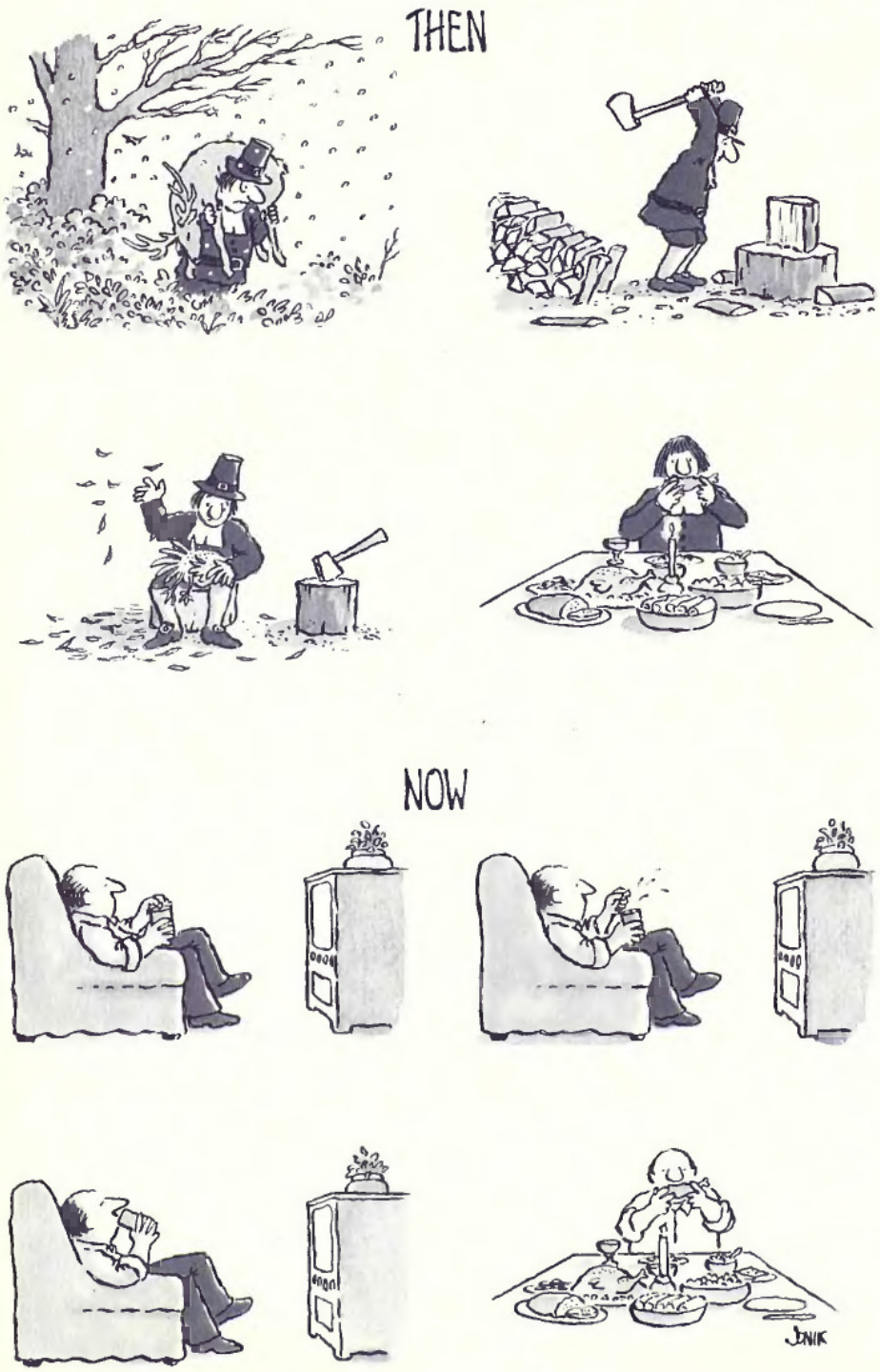
"Wait a minute," I said, "what are you doing?" I was unable to hide the panic in my voice—honest to God, I had no idea what this woman was up to.

"I'm leaving," Lesley informed me. She drew the cigarette under her nose and smiled smugly. "Got a date. I only came in to pick up my pay check."

With that, she fluttered her fingers in farewell and began weaving toward the front door.

"Hang on a second," I called. She turned around and grinned. I wanted my 20 back, but I didn't dare ask for it. Instead, I stayed right where I was, pegged to my seat by a doggedly persistent hard-on. "You mean to tell me you aren't even *working* tonight?"

She turned around and shook her head. "Haven't you figured it out yet?" she called back, the unlit cigarette dangling between her lips. "Honey, I'm *always* working."



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# ROUNDUP

*(continued from page 132)*

*"Camcorders have come a long way from the ten-pound behemoths that hit the market about eight years ago."*

front-projection TV, such as the ones offered by Barco or Vidikron. You'll be laying out some pretty hefty dollars (the least expensive models start at $5000), but the thrills make it worth it. Rear-projection TVs are more realistically priced. Some of the best are found in Pioneer's Elite line (priced from $4300 to $4800). Mitsubishi's rear-projection sets are also excellent and range from 40 to 70 inches at prices from $2400 to $6400.

Direct-view TVs (the kind with picture tubes) aren't jumbo-sized (35 inches is the largest screen size currently available), but their picture quality ranks high. For a picture-perfect image, it's tough to beat two Sony XBR-PRO sets—the 32-inch PVM-3230 (about $3000) and the 25-inch XBR-PRO ($2500). Toshiba America has a sharp 32-inch CX3025A Supertube (about $2200), and if cabinet styling is of prime importance, take a look at RCA's modern, angle-topped, 20-inch F20706FT ($500) and Sony's sexy, round-cornered 27-inch KV-27EXR20 ($950).

Incidentally, here's how to determine which screen size is right for your room. Measure the distance from your favorite chair or couch to the point where your TV will sit. Then divide that measurement by four—the maximum screen height you can comfortably view. For example, if your chair is about 60 inches from your TV, the biggest set you should consider is one that is 15 inches high (that's a 25-inch TV screen, measured diagonally). The scan lines on the screen may prove annoying if you purchase anything larger.

### TRIPLE PLAYBACK

You're familiar with the three VCR formats—VHS, 8mm and Beta. There are now three subformats, or high-band versions: The VHS upgrade is called Super-VHS (S-VHS), the 8mm improvement is dubbed Hi8 and Super Beta (a half-step upgrade developed several years ago) has a high-grade version called ED-Beta.

While ED-Beta offers what many consider to be the best picture quality, it's mostly for serious videophiles and semi-professionals.

S-VHS and Hi8 are less expensive but comparable in quality; both offer pictures with around 400 lines of horizontal resolution, compared with the standard 240 lines.

Expect audio upgrades in both the S-VHS and the Hi-8 formats. In the next year or so, both will offer digital stereo sound with the audio quality of a CD. Regardless of format, VCRs are finally becoming more user friendly. That means better owner's manuals, fewer buttons to push and on-screen displays to walk you through procedures. One company, Gemstar, is even offering a VCR-programing device called VCR Plus+, which automatically sets your unit after you punch in the numeric codes found in *TV Guide* and many local newspapers. General Electric, ProScan, RCA and Zenith will soon feature VCR Plus+ circuitry in their new VCRs.

### THE LASER'S EDGE

The laser disc is unsurpassed in both picture and sound quality (see Roger Ebert's sidebar on page 178). While many people own both a CD and a laserdisc player, the most cost-effective purchase is a combination unit—one that plays eight- and 12-inch laser discs as well as three- and five-inch CDs. Panasonic's LX-1000 ($1200) and Pioneer's CLD-3090 ($1200) are both excellent units that play both sides of laser discs automatically. If the two-sided-play feature is not a priority, Pioneer's CLD-M90 ($700) accepts either an eight- or a 12-inch laser disc and can hold five CDs simultaneously.

### MINI HAPPY RETURNS

So much equipment, so little space. If that's the lament, perhaps a minisystem is the answer. Most mini stereo units combine a preamp/amp, a tuner, a CD player, an audio cassette recorder, two matching speakers and sometimes even a turntable or a Surround Sound system—all reduced to fit in the space of a full-sized receiver and tape deck. Four new minisystems that would sound terrific in an apartment, dorm room or office are Nakamichi's CompactReceiverSystem1 ($350) and companion CDCassettePlayer1 ($450), Sharp's CD-C500 ($750), with a six-disc CD changer and a separate subwoofer, Sony's MHC-2600 ($950) and Panasonic's SC-CH10 ($1050), with Dolby Pro-Logic decoder and two speakers.

### PLAY ON!

Hand-held video games are no longer kid's stuff. Sega's Game Gear, for example, can be used by one or two players, has a built-in 2½" x 3¼" color-LCD screen and an optional TV tuner/adapter that turns it into a portable color TV set. The $150 price (plus $120 for the adapter) isn't kid's stuff, either.

Also check out Atari's improved Lynx ($100), NEC's TurboExpress ($300) and Nintendo's Game Boy (black-and-white screen, $90). Of the three, TurboExpress offers the highest-quality visual images and, like Game Gear, it has an optional TV tuner. Another big plus is that TurboExpress uses the same game cards as the TurboGrafx-16 home unit, giving it an instant library of 55 games.

### TAPE IT

Camcorders have come a long way from the ten-pound behemoths that hit the market about eight years ago. A good choice is to pick a model that accepts the same full-sized VHS cassettes used in your home VCR. An S-VHS camera, such as Hitachi's VMS-8200A ($1700), will give you top-quality images, but consider other features such as a zoom lens and variable shutter speeds.

Several S-VHS (and standard VHS) camcorders take special minicassettes called VHS-Cs, which can be played on your home VCR using a special cassette adapter shell. VHS-C cameras are pint-sized and eminently portable. However, the tapes can store only about 30 minutes of video when set at the best-quality recording speed. By comparison, all Hi8 (and standard 8mm) camcorders can

record two hours of top-quality video on a single cassette.

If you're serious about editing, investigate Sony's medium-sized Hi8 CCD-V801 ($1900). It's the first consumer camcorder to offer time code, a function that allows you to edit tape with precision.

Canon also offers a near-professional Hi8 unit named the L1 ($3000) that takes a series of interchangeable lenses. The L1 comes with a standard 15-to-1 (8mm to 120mm) VL zoom lens, but you can also purchase an adapter ($350) that accepts the EOS series of lenses that fit Canon's 35mm still cameras.

Another great Hi8 model, Sony's $1500 CCD-TR81, weighs less than two pounds (without battery and tape cassette), fits in your coat pocket and hooks up directly to your TV set for playback.

Once you've shot some memorable footage, consider investing in an editing controller, such as Panasonic's Digital A/V Mixer (model WJ-AVE5, $1800) and Digital Special Effects Generator and Audio Mixer (model WJ-AVE3, $1100), Videonic's DirectED PLUS ($600) or Sony's RM-E700 (the companion to the CCD-V801 Camcorder, $1000).

### NOW HEAR THIS

If you own a Walkman or drive a car with a cassette player, you'll probably want a home deck for recording personal tapes. The highest-quality analogue tapes are made on audio cassettes that have Dolby S noise-reduction circuits. They're nearly impossible to tell from the original discs, yet when they are played in portable or car stereos without the S circuitry, there is still very little sonic compromise. Dolby S recorder/players are just reaching the market place and are priced about $250 more than conventional decks.

There's also the digital-audio-tape (DAT) format to consider. DAT machines, available in both full-sized and portable models, can make both live recordings and exact digital copies of CDs. A special chip installed in DAT machines limits digital clones to first-generation copies; however, you can make as many analogue copies as desired.

Another new audio-recording system looms on the horizon. Developed by the Dutch company Philips, the Digital Compact Cassette (DCC) system will be in stores in 1992. Not only do DCC machines record and play music digitally (on special new cassettes), they can play regular analogue cassettes, too.

### OTHER GOODIES

What electronic wonders are about to emerge? One is CDTV (for Commodore Dynamic Total Vision), a CD-ROM-based interactive entertainment/education system from the company that brought us the Amiga and Commodore computers. In fact, CDTV is basically a home computer designed to look like a CD player. Software is available in five categories: arts and leisure, education, entertainment, music and reference. CDTV units are currently on sale for about $1000.

Philips will soon launch its noncompatible competitor to CDTV. It's called CD-I (Compact Disc Interactive) and, like CDTV, it's based on five-inch compact-disc technology. CD-I also offers audio, text, graphics and interactivity and it, too, can play regular audio CDs.

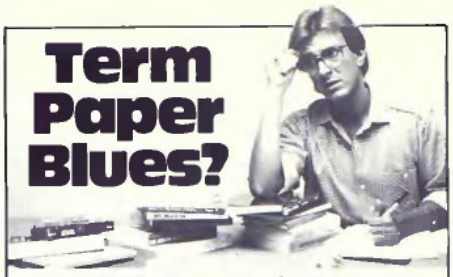
While both CDTV and CD-I claim to be the be-all and end-all in CD-based games and entertainment, there's a third interactive format, DVI (Digital Video Interactive), vying for a share of the market. Unfortunately, none of the interactive/multimedia discs for these systems can be played in one another's machines.

Sony, too, is tossing a couple of discs into this ring. One, called the Data Discman, uses three-inch, CD-ROM discs to store information on a wide range of subjects, including education, business and entertainment. The $599 pocket-sized players, which come with encyclopedia, travel/translator and health-guide discs, are hitting stores this month.

Sony's second innovation, the Mini Disc (MD), is a 2½-inch CD-type disc that is held in a plastic caddy similar to a 3½-inch computer disc. Through the use of sophisticated data-compression techniques, the MD can hold as much digital stereo as a five-inch compact disc. Furthermore, you can record on it, and it's shockproof, too. Sony has plans to bring this product to market in 1992.

Last, there has been a lot of speculation about high-definition television (HDTV), prompting many people to put off buying a new TV for fear that it will soon become obsolete. Not to worry. HDTV *is* coming but not for several years. When it arrives, it will offer much better picture quality, digital sound and a new screen shape that's 30 percent wider.

In the interim, look for the introduction of wide-screen televisions. Hitachi, JVC, RCA, GE, Sony and Toshiba debuted prototype sets featuring screens with a 16:9 ratio, similar to the width–height ratio found in movie theaters. These sets, which will initially be priced between $5000 and $7000, will have strong appeal to laser-disc owners, because many current LD releases are available in wide-screen (letter-box) format. And, with the addition of an outboard decoder, some of these wide-screen sets may be easily converted to HDTV when the time is right.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# THUMBS UP FOR LASER DISCS

**By ROGER EBERT**

I have a built-in resistance to new technological marvels, inspired by my laziness to learn how to use them, so I wasn't very receptive that day five years ago in Tower Video on Sunset Strip when the guy asked me how come I was looking at the video tapes instead of the laser discs.

I mumbled something about how I thought laser discs were an obsolete format, and he chuckled patronizingly, saying I had them confused with the old video-disc system that was so crude it played movies with a needle. Now, your laser disc, he said, is state of the art. It works just like a big, shiny CD with a picture on it. And it's about twice as good as VHS tapes.

That was an exaggeration. In fact, laser discs are only about 60 percent better than tapes—but what a vivid difference that is, especially if you have a large-screen TV.

Within a month of that visit to Tower, I was a convert. Laser discs, I found, can deliver true Dolby Surround Sound, often digitally processed. They also offer as many as three distinct sound tracks. On my *Taxi Driver* disc, for example, I can hear the movie's original sound track. Or I can push a button and hear director Martin Scorsese and writer Paul Schrader discussing their movie as they watch it. Or I can push another button and hear only Bernard Herrmann's score.

Despite its clear superiority to VHS tape, however, the laser disc still languishes in obscurity. Fewer than 1,000,000 of the machines are in use in the U.S., as compared with more than 60,000,000 VCRs. Although I and other video buffs have been praising the format for years, there is an inherent bias, which boils down to three complaints: (1) You can't record on them, (2) You can't rent them and (3) Why do I need another gadget?

True, you can't record on laser discs—but since the potential laser convert already has a VCR, so what?

True, laser discs are usually offered for sale, not rental, but most discs, despite their dramatic technical superiority, sell for less than tapes. *Platoon*, for example, was released simultaneously on tape for $89.95 and on disc for $29.95. Increasing numbers of outlets in larger cities are beginning to rent discs: They're cheaper to manufacture than tapes, do not wear out and are almost impossible to pirate. If you live in a town without a laser-disc outlet, the entire inventory of some 6000 titles is accessible through many mail-order houses with 800 numbers and overnight delivery.

That leaves the third objection: Why another gadget? My answer would be an appeal to sheer hedonism. It's your life, eyes, ears and imagination. If you can experience a movie with a picture 60 percent better and sound incomparably better than what your VCR can deliver, why not?

My feeling is that anyone with a TV screen larger than 25 inches can benefit from the laser format. Anyone with a rear-projection screen of more than 35 inches absolutely needs it, because a video-taped picture weakens as it spreads over large areas. As more affluent movie buffs commit to the home-theater concept, they'll demand the superior strength and clarity of the laser-disc picture. (My own setup is a ceiling-mounted, three-lens front-projection system that throws a 120-inch picture onto the wall screen and addresses eight speakers, including a center channel. With the right laser disc, the result approximates your average Multiplex, and the sound is better.)

Another advantage of laser discs is instant access. Most discs are broken down into chapter headings, which are listed on the album cover, so you can punch in a number and go directly to your favorite scene. You can even go directly to an individual frame and freeze it (helpful for students of the *Playboy* Playmate discs). And you can advance or reverse the movie one frame at a time and at different speeds. There's even a black box that connects a Macintosh computer to a laser machine; with it, you can edit any disc to play or omit shots and scenes as you choose (you can drive friends crazy with this gizmo).

Here's my list of ten personal favorite laser discs:

*Taxi Driver*, as already mentioned, especially for the enthusiasm of Scorsese and Schrader as they remember creating their landmark movie and for the opportunity to hear the last score Herrmann wrote before he died.

*The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* and *Black Narcissus*, two classics by British director Michael Powell, who on the alternative sound track discusses the movies with a director who found them a profound personal influence—none other than Scorsese. It's a movie buff's dream, being able to eavesdrop on two great directors talking shop.

Orson Welles's *The Magnificent Ambersons*, which set some kind of record for supplementary material. In addition to a brilliant transfer, it has a parallel shot-by-shot commentary by Welles expert Robert Carringer, the Mercury Theater's radio version of the play, footage from a silent version of the same story, every page of the shooting script, all of the publicity photos and art director's sketches (one page per frame) *and* interviews with Welles.

*The Night of the Hunter*, starring Robert Mitchum, in a breath-takingly good print of the only movie ever directed by Charles Laughton.

The *Indiana Jones* trilogy—let's count it as one—which is available in superb transfers supervised by Steven Spielberg, himself a laser-disc fan.

*2001: A Space Odyssey*, with a transfer personally masterminded by quality-control fanatic Stanley Kubrick.

Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*. I was lukewarm when I saw it in the theater, but the full capability of the laser sound track encompasses the viewer.

*The General*, by Buster Keaton, a silent comedy often seen in scratched prints and shown jerkily at the wrong speed. As it emerges on laser disc, in pristine condition and at the right speed, it's great entertainment.

*The Third Man*, with Welles in the most famous entrance in movie history. Soon after I took my first laser-vision player home, I put both disc and VHS versions of the movie on to compare picture quality. On the tape, it looked as if Joseph Cotten were wearing a muddy black sports coat. On the disc, I could clearly admire it as Harris tweed.

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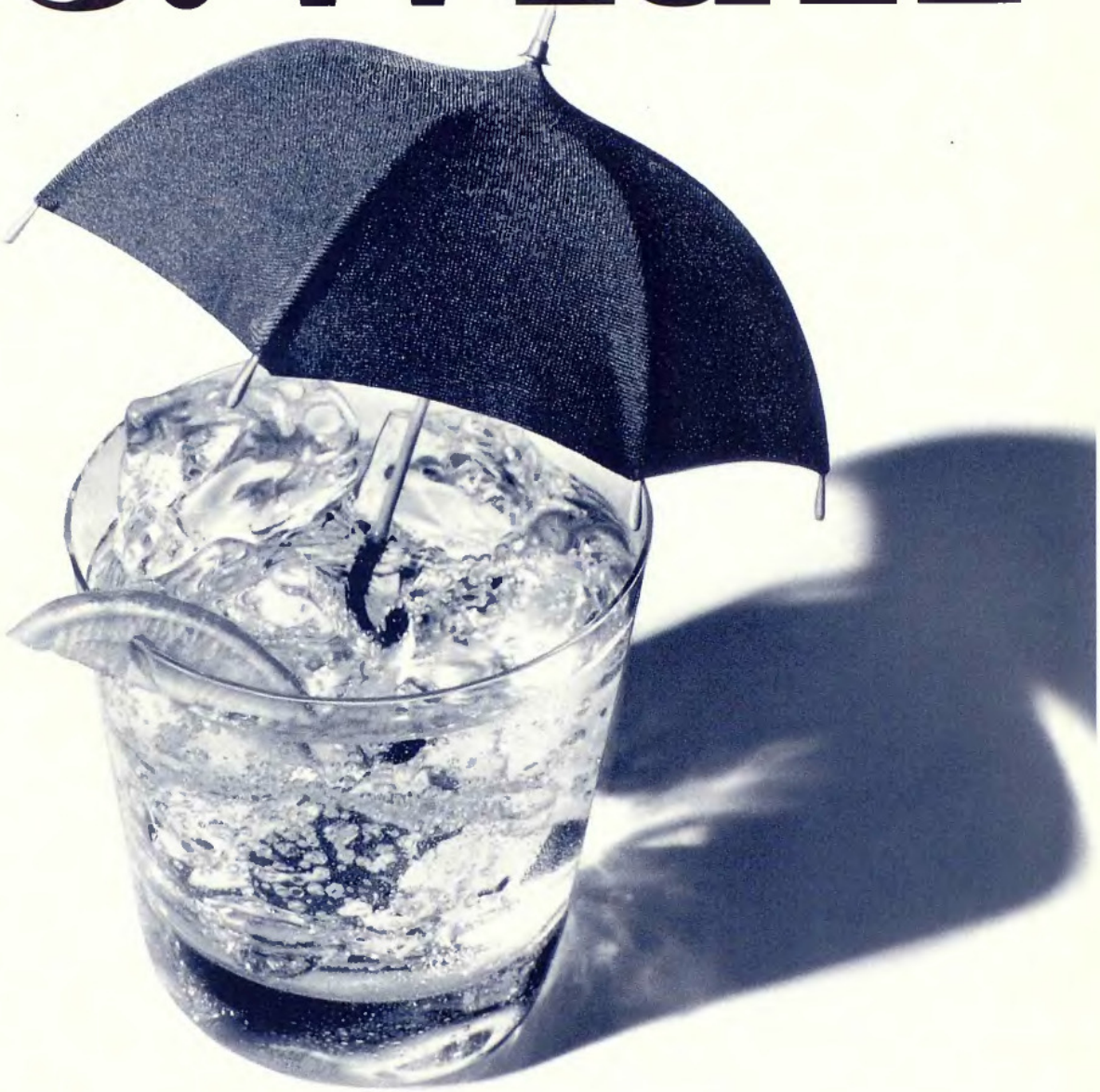

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# VARSITY TEAM

Whether you spend your weekends tuning up your street rod or ducking into the trendiest clubs, the hottest thing to wear is a varsity jacket. Yes, we know that just a few years ago, a varsity jacket was the kind of locker-room look that you'd find only hanging in the closet of a college jock. But today, some of the best menswear designers have joined the team, mixing unusual and exciting color combinations with warm, durable fabrics such as wool melton, suede and leather. A chenille or leather appliqué of a favorite team, a patriotic emblem or even a fashion logo on the front, back or sleeves is a must. Wear one with a shirt and tie or oversized jeans and a T-shirt. Either way, you'll be on top of the game.

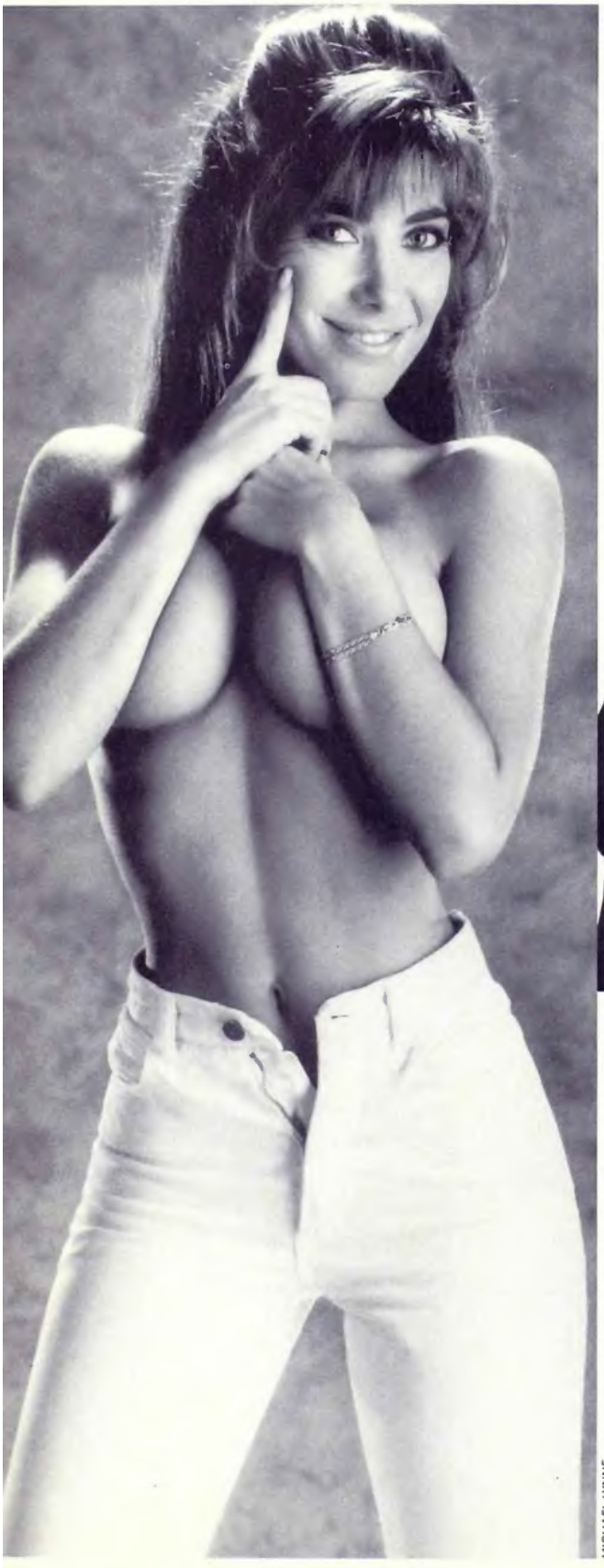
**Below: A day with their 1932 Ford "Highboy" is no varsity drag for this quartet, who are into the latest looks in team-style jackets. Left to right: Wool-melton-and-black-leather varsity jacket with quilted-nylon lining, by Reebok, $250. Lambskin zip-front varsity jacket with football-motif insets on back and sleeves, by Michael Hoban for North Beach, $650. Wool/polyester-melton-and-black-leather varsity jacket with chenille America logo on back, by Perry Ellis, $375. Wool-melton varsity jacket with cowhide sleeves, by Golden Bear, about $150.**

STEVE CONWAY

Where & How to Buy on page 171.

## Up in Arms

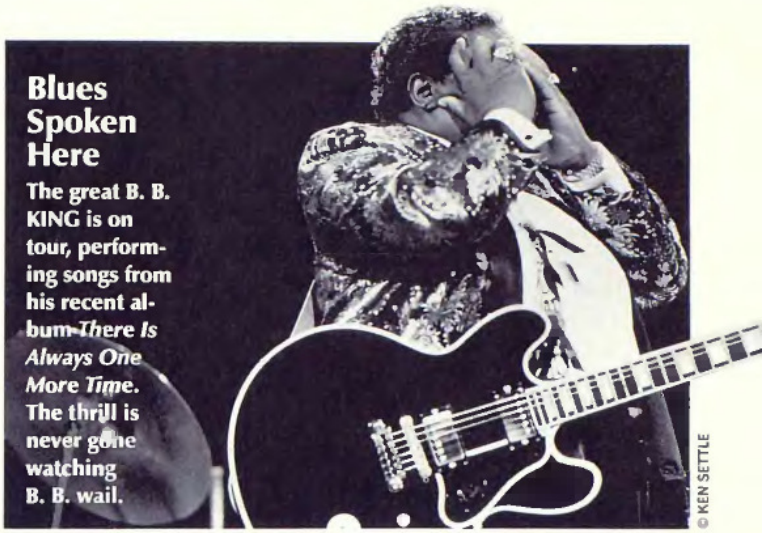
**Starlet JOANNA ILENE REM has modeled bathing suits on TV, appeared on the cover of a Glamour California Girls calendar, made a fashion and music video (with Andy Taylor), and that's just for starters. While wishing her luck, we're waiting for Joanna to get too big for her britches.**



MICHAEL LYNNE

## Blues Spoken Here

**The great B. B. KING is on tour, performing songs from his recent album *There Is Always One More Time*. The thrill is never gone watching B. B. wail.**



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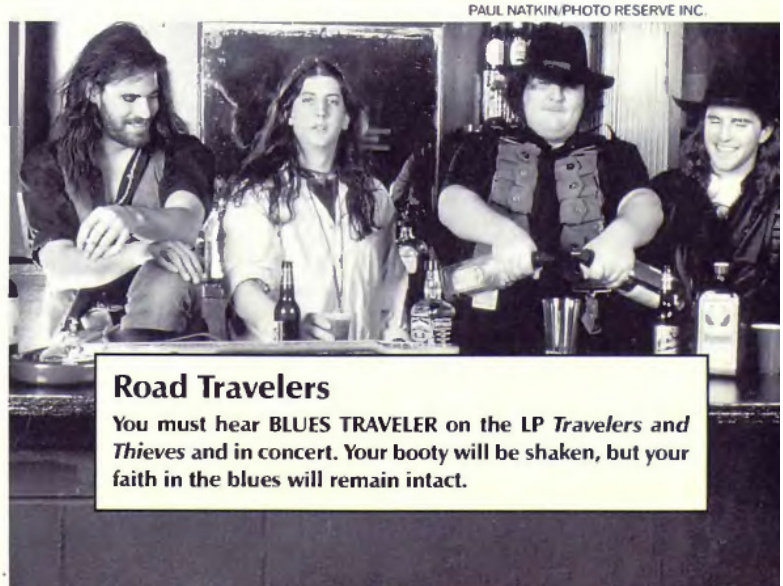
## Sally's Working on Her Laugh Tracks

**Although actress SALLY STRUTHERS has played a million parts since *All in the Family*, seeing her bounce comedy off Rob Reiner once again last summer was a lot of fun. We caught up with her at a charity do, calling her muse.**

PAUL NATKIN/PHOTO RESERVE INC.

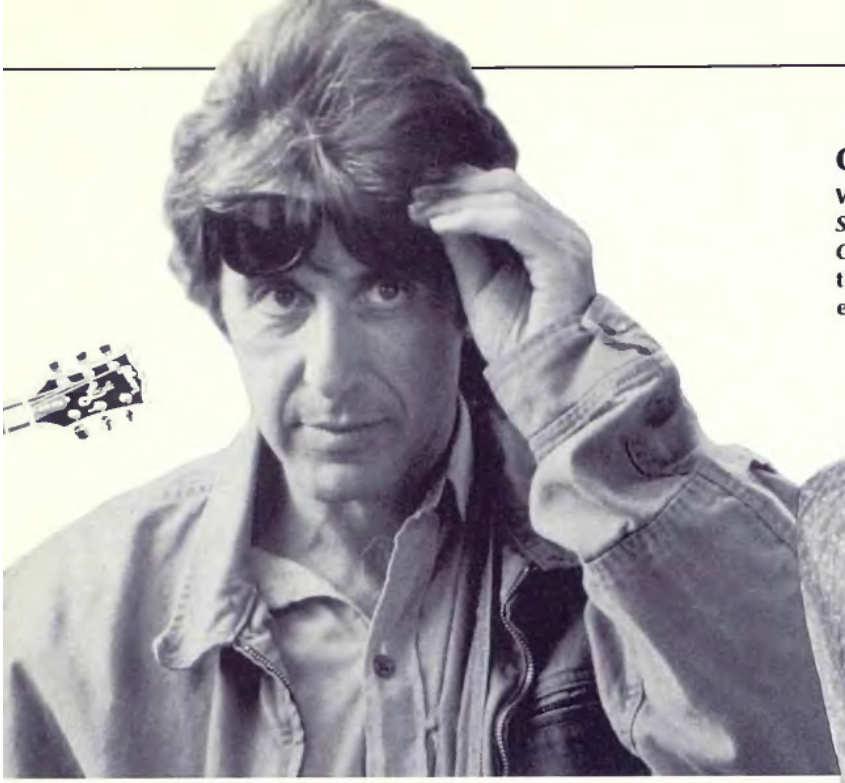


## Road Travelers

**You must hear BLUES TRAVELER on the LP *Travelers and Thieves* and in concert. Your booty will be shaken, but your faith in the blues will remain intact.**

## Queen of the B's

When you think of MICHELLE BAUER, what comes to mind? *Sorority Babes in the Slime Ball Bowl-o-Rama*, *Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers* or her role as a nun in *Spirits*? Michelle thinks this stuff is amusing. "My philosophy is to have fun . . . enjoy what I'm doing." To tell you the truth, so do we.



DAN GOLDEN

## The Eyes Have It

We can do huge chunks of dialog from all three *Godfather* movies and from *Scarface*. So we're always on the AL PACINO watch. His latest film, *Frankie and Johnny*, reunites him with *Scarface* co-star Michelle Pfeiffer. They play a couple of blue-collar co-workers who have a fling. It's a long way from whacking out bad guys, but we're willing to risk it.

© ALBERT FERREIRA/UMI

© ROBERT MATHEU

## Do You Know Susie?

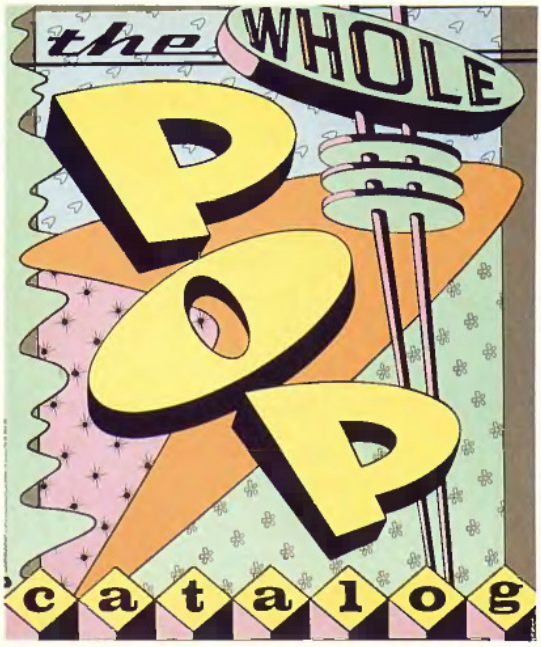
Singer SUSIE HATTON is lucky; she sounds great and looks fine. Want proof? Check out her debut LP, *Body & Soul*. Catch her in concert. Hatton calls her songs "tales of love, lust and what comes in between." Gotcha, Susie.

## MARCH WITH THE LEGION

Hardened criminals, shiftless chivalric knights, mercenary soldiers seeking fortune and adventure—and all willing to die for France. That's the French Foreign Legion. And if you think life in the legion is like the movie *Beau Geste*, pick up a copy of *The French Foreign Legion*, by Douglas Porch, subtitled "A Complete History of the Legendary Fighting Force," from Harper-Collins. It's 728 pages of danger, desertion and death, all for $35. Our kind of crowd.

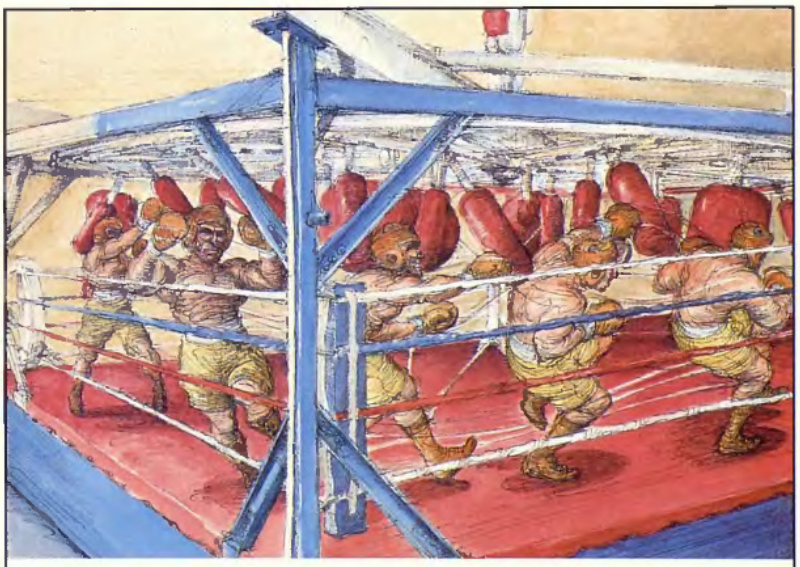
## CULTURE SCHLOCK

"The ultimate source . . . for all those things you loved . . . even the things your mother threw away when you were away at school" is how Avon Books describes *The Whole Pop Catalog*. Ad characters, rubber stamps, surf sounds, diners, Betty Boop, classic detectives and much more are examined within its 608 pages. Look for the catalog in bookstores or call Avon at 800-223-0690 to order a copy. A great way to blow 20 bucks.



## HOT ROD

Looking for a piece of exercise equipment that will tone, sculpt and strengthen your muscles without having to take up half the floor space in your apartment? Check out the Stealth Gym Flexerciser, a 60-inch-long, two-pound rod made of the same high-tech fiber that's found in the Stealth bomber. To exercise with it, you slip your hands into the wrist straps and bend the Flexerciser (which is three times stronger than steel) into any of 100 positions, about 12 times. The rod can't break and it snaps back perfectly straight. Exercise Products in Dallas sells the Flexerciser for $56.50, postpaid, including an exercise chart. Call 800-621-1203 to order.



## LORD OF THE RING

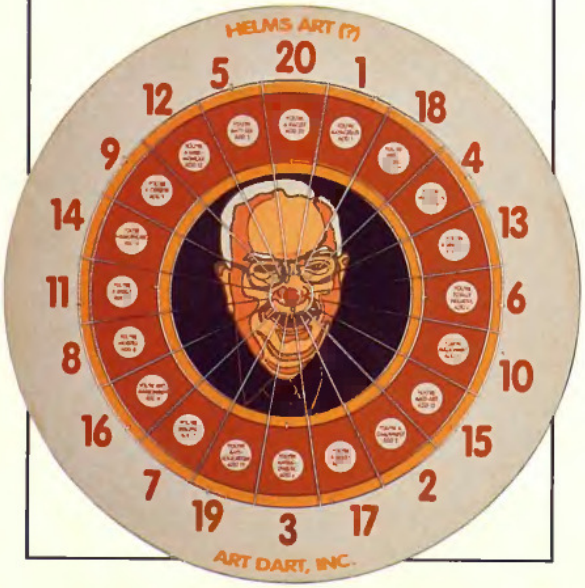
No, The Ultimate Warrior isn't the name of Arnold Schwarzenegger's next film. It's a fully programmable, computer-controlled training system with 46 targets to keep anyone who has the nerve to challenge it moving, ducking and punching. Thomas Stephens, the C.E.O. of EverFast Equipment in Spokane, Washington, created the Warrior because he wanted an opponent that forced him "to throw up to 300 punches per round." The Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs has ordered the $250,000 Warrior and it will also be featured in upcoming Hollywood films. Call 800-473-0010 to order a demonstration video tape for $11.95. Watching it makes you tired.

## LIGHT UP THE BARREL

If you want the coziness of a roaring hearth but don't have the proper ventilation, check out Mastercraft Metal's barrel fireplace that burns gel-alcohol fuels for three hours. There's no smoke and just enough heat to toast your tootsies. A 30-gallon oak barrel sells for $400, plus shipping, while the 50-gallon model sells for $500. (Both house ceramic logs that hold the cans of gel.) Call 800-654-1704 for more information on how to order. Fire when ready!

## STICK IT TO JESSE

If you don't care for the stand that "Senator No" of North Carolina takes on civil rights and other issues, then stick it to him with a Revenge dartboard game. In the board's center is a computer-generated caricature of Jesse Helms. The price: $27.95, plus shipping, sent to Art Dart at P.O. Box 49508, Greensboro, North Carolina 27419, or call 800-338-5755. Ready! Aim! Bull's-eye!




## SKELETON CREW

For all you Halloween freaks who just can't get enough of a creepy good thing, the Anatomical Chart Company, 8221 Kimball Avenue, Skokie, Illinois 60076, is selling a 36-inch-tall plastic skeleton named Mr. Thrifty at a price that won't cost you an arm and a leg. Only $54.95, postpaid, including a metal stand and a clear-plastic dust cover. (Yes, his jaw moves and all dem bones are connected to one another.) Of corpse, if you have to own a life-sized model, Anatomical also sells one in plastic for $440, postpaid, that's a scream at parties. To order either one, call 800-621-7500.

## LIQUID TREASURE

Fifty years ago, the British cargo ship S.S. Politician ran aground in the Outer Hebrides, taking with it a load of Scotch whisky. Last year, a salvage company recovered several dozen bottles, and now New World Wine Company Ltd. in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, is marketing a blend of the old Scotch mixed with a contemporary stock of fine whiskies in a commemorative decanter emblazoned with the name S.S. POLITICIAN "WHISKY GALORE." The price per bottle will be about $300, including a history of the wreck and the salvage. Call 800-347-6559 for the nearest retailer.

## FOR GOOD FELLAS ONLY

Miscellaneous Man, a vintage graphics company, has just issued Gentlemen's Pleasures, a color catalog containing dozens of posters created between 1900 and the Forties that celebrate the fine art of drinking, smoking, driving, riding, shooting and other manly pastimes. The framed 1915 London Life cigarettes poster pictured here, for example, costs $475. A catalog costs five dollars sent to Miscellaneous Man, P.O. Box 1776, New Freedom, Pennsylvania 17349, or call 717-235-4766. (M.M. also publishes catalogs on other subjects.) It's nice stuff, and the owner, George Theofiles, is one hell of a guy.

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